

# WGEA Gender Pay Gap Reporting: Bartier Perry Statement

February 2024

Bartier Perry welcomes the accountability and transparency of the WGEA Gender Pay Gap reporting system in measuring outcomes and assessing gender pay gap initiatives at our firm. We recognise that the gender pay gap is one of many measures that drive a successful firm and it is an important one to us.

## Not yet good enough and more to do

Bartier Perry's starting point in addressing the gender pay gap is that where we are at is not good enough and there is more to do.

We have set out in this statement some of the steps we have taken to date to close the gender pay gap in a sustainable manner, but our work is by no means complete. As a firm we are committed to continuous improvement and to achieving a better balance. We know we are better as a more diverse firm and better as a more equitable firm.

One of many approaches in focusing on closing the gender pay gap was to, five years ago, heavily focus on our pipeline of female talent.

We believe our investment in recruiting and supporting our women to leadership will substantially close the gap in the next five years.

## Understanding the gap

We recognise that our overall gender pay gap is due to a lower number of women in legal senior roles and in particular at the partner level where pay is higher.

The entire legal sector has made significant strides in recent years in terms of addressing equality and the pay gap. Women now make up 55% of all solicitors in Australia and the rate of female entry rose 86 per cent in the past 11 years (while the number of male solicitors grew by 32 per cent over the same period).<sup>1</sup>

Bartier Perry's overall gender composition of legal practitioners is consistent to that of NSW Registered Legal Practitioners list of 54% female and 46% male.

While this gender composition is positive, there are two factors that continue to impact the gender pay gap at Bartier Perry and in our profession generally.

Firstly, the increase in junior women lawyers has yet to flow through to the partnership level. Bartier Perry's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets clear targets to increase women in senior leadership positions and initiatives to retain them.

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<sup>1</sup>2022 National Profile of Solicitors prepared by Urbis for the Law Society of New South Wales 26 April 2023

Secondly, at that senior legal level the inter-firm competition for female candidates is intense. At Bartier Perry five out of seven senior management positions are held by women where there is a broader pool of talent in the wider market.

We recognise that our overall gender pay gap is due to a lower number of females in leadership as well as the overall increased gender composition of females in administrative and support roles.

**Our Strategy**

Bartier Perry has invested heavily in our pipeline of female legal talent. Women account for 52% of our senior associate cohort.

In the last two years 53% of those promoted in the firm have been female.

We currently have 22% female partners and are working towards a firmwide target of 40%. That figure is actually reversed at lawyer level - 78% female and 22% male.

The table below sets out that trend across the firm.

	Males	Females
Executive Management	29%	71%
Partners	78%	22%
Special Counsel	50%	50%
Senior Associates	48%	52%
Associates	7%	93%
Lawyers	24%	76%
Law Graduates	20%	80%
Administrative and support roles	17%	83%

We are also not simply assuming, waiting, or expecting that this change will happen at partnership level – we are actively driving it.

We need to ensure as many of those promoted continue to progress through the firm to partnership, where both statistically and salary wise the best impact on the pay gap can be made.

Examples of initiatives put in place to achieve this include:

- Undertaking a like for like analysis of pay annually, which indicates we are paying women and men equally and competitively in like for like roles.
- Targeted female talent in lateral recruitment.
- Competitive and substantially improved gender neutral parental leave policy which includes 20 weeks paid leave with superannuation and flex for all working options.

- Establishment of the Gender Diversity Committee to drive and monitor gender equality initiatives within the firm.
- Structured mentoring and sponsorship programs to support our women talent into leadership.
- Salary benchmarking at recruitment and annually during remuneration reviews using industry tools such as Mercer salary benchmarking to ensure market competitiveness and pay equity in like for like roles. This also helps to remove subjective factors that can contribute to a gender pay gap.
- Western Sydney University Scholarship programs targeting female law students.
- Developed a Return-to-Work Program to support staff returning from extended leave eg parental leave.
- Executive Leadership Coaching for emerging leaders to assist and support their transition to leadership roles.

We are committed to progress for sustainable equality both within our firm and the wider legal profession.

**Riana Steyn**  
**CEO – Bartier Perry**