



EOWA Key Messages for Equal Pay Day 2011

Time to Reflect

- This year marks 25 years since the Affirmative Action Act was passed, so it is timely to reflect on what has been achieved and what still needs to be done.
- There is no doubt that women's working lives and prospects are much better now than 25 years ago - however, discrimination and disadvantage in the workplace remain a problem.

Gender Pay Gap

- One of the most persistent problems is the gender pay gap. The relative gap between male and female pay levels is about the same as it was 25 years ago.
- Currently, the gender pay gap is 17.2%. To close this gap, women would have to work an extra 63 days to match what men earn.
- It is completely unacceptable that this situation still exists today.
- This ongoing pay gap has serious financial impacts on women in terms of both their earnings while working and also their retirement savings. Women are two and a half times more likely to live in poverty in their old age than men.
- Employers need to take action to eliminate this discrimination in the workplace. However, not enough is happening to redress this inequity.
- A significant number of organisations reporting to the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) reveal a gender pay gap in their workplaces. However, survey results released in 2010 revealed that less than 40 per cent of these organisations conduct an annual pay equity analysis. Of the organisations that do conduct some kind of analysis, only about half indicated that their analysis had actually resulted in an action plan to address the gender pay gap in their organisation.

Why the gender pay gap should be eliminated?

- Eliminating the gender pay gap is fundamental to achieving gender equality in the workplace.
- Gender equality is essentially a matter of fairness. It sits comfortably with the Australian notion of egalitarianism.
- And, equally importantly, it makes good business sense.
- Research by reputable organisations demonstrates a direct link between an increased number of women in senior roles and financial success.
- With low unemployment and significant skills shortages, it is obvious we should utilise ALL the talent, male and female, that exists in Australia. Companies with good diversity records which include actively addressing the gender pay gap will have a competitive advantage as companies compete for talent, strive to retain talent and look to improve productivity.

EOWA's enhanced focus on pay equity

- The gender pay gap can be a difficult issue to address. EOWA is committed to assisting employers to take action to deal with this issue. As announced by the Minister for the Status of Women, The Hon Kate Ellis, in March 2011, EOWA will have an enhanced focus on pay equity in the coming years under proposed new legislation. EOWA already has a suite of resources and information on its website that relate to pay equity issues. Going forward, EOWA will further enhance this suite and will put particular focus on working directly with employers to assist them address their pay equity issues.