



## PROGRESS TOO SLOW ON REDUCING GENDER PAY GAP

We don't celebrate Equal Pay day, we acknowledge it. There is nothing to celebrate about a 17.9% gender wage gap? And what does it mean anyway?

It means a \$284.20 per week difference on average weekly earnings between men and women. It does not reflect like for like earnings industry by industry, but as the [Workplace Gender Equality Agency](#) explains, it does symbolise the overall position of women in the workforce.

There is however, some cause for celebration on this Equal Pay Day, Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September because we know that change does happen when individuals, business and government unite. [BPW Australia](#) applauds the initiatives such as the [Male Champions of Change](#) initiated by Sex Discrimination Commissioner Liz Broderick, who is retiring. The recent forum of MCC saw some 750 business leaders (mostly men) talking about their personal commitment to improving the gender balance in their organisations.

The Coalition Federal Government is committed to increasing women's workforce participation; Telstra has declared that all roles are to be advertised at [Telstra](#) as flexible; Life Saving Victoria wants to boost the numbers of women in senior Leadership and the St Kilda Football Club is calling for gender equality across elite sport – the latest area to be the focus of shocking wage disparity. We know that 'mens work' is paid more than 'womens work', but when our female [Matildas](#) received \$500 in match fees vs our male Socceroos \$7500: most Australians were shocked

Overall women have higher levels of education. Their workforce participation is increasing (now 46% of all employees) yet only one third of the largest employers in Australia have females in key management positions.

Not only do women currently earn lower average pay than men but over the long term this dramatically affects their [superannuation accumulation](#) – typically compounded by broken work patterns and reduced career progression due to caring responsibilities. Women are currently retiring on balances of 46% less than men.

BPW Australia president Janis Shaw says "We need change now: more flexible workplaces will see more women in executive roles. Why ignore the talent of half your workforce? We need more women in diverse and non-traditional trades and occupations – only 28% of women are [STEM](#) (science, technology, engineering and maths) qualified; and more women in senior management".

While collaboration between government, business and employees is the long term solution to closing the gap, women can take action now. An online pay and contract negotiation checklist [Know Your Value](#) can help secure better pay and conditions and women are being encouraged to seek consider their financial decisions to maximise their retirement incomes (<http://security4women.org.au/letter-to-my-younger-self/>): two new online resources for women, by economic Security4Women, a national alliance of women's organisations that includes BPW Australia.

Events are being held across Australia to highlight the Gender Pay Gap, details at [Equal Pay Day Alliance](#).

**Further information: Janis Shaw, president, BPW Australia +61 7 3112 6838**