

**equal  
pay  
day .-**

## What is equal pay and why don't we have it?

The basic concept behind pay equity is that men and women should be paid equally for work that is of either equal or comparable value<sup>i</sup>.

A lack of equal pay or "pay inequity" can be measured in two ways:

- First, as a direct comparison between male and female employees doing the same work but earning a different salary, including penalty rates, overtime, performance payments, bonuses and non-financial benefits.
- Second, the difference in pay between industry sectors or occupations with a greater value placed on some types of work compared with others<sup>ii</sup>.

To date, industries with a majority of female workers (e.g. education and training) have attracted lower pay rates than male-dominated industries (e.g. mining).

This difference in "value" is partly historical, emanating from a time when women were not regarded as "breadwinners" nor were they welcome in most parts of the workforce. "Women's work" was, and still is, often viewed as based on innate, nurturing skills which downplay the value of work traditionally performed by women.

Male-dominated industries have also traditionally been more unionised, with better pay and conditions forged through decades of negotiation, disputes and legal rulings.

These historic differences and attitudes continue to be reflected in the pay packets of women today, and in the ongoing practices of many workplaces. This results in a wage gap that has fluctuated minimally between a low of 15 per cent in 2004 and its current level of 17.1 per cent.

### Facts

In 2014<sup>iii</sup>, Australian women:

- Make up 45.9 per cent of all employees;
- Have a Labour Force Participation Rate of 58.6 per cent compared to 70.9 per cent for men;
- Constitute 69.4 per cent of all part-time employees, 54.8 per cent of all casual employees and 35.6 per cent of all full time employees;
- Earn an average of 18.2 per cent less than men (based on full time employees);
- Female graduates salaries are on average 9.4 per cent less than those of males;
- Of the ASX 200 companies, 18.2 per cent have female directors, 3.0 per cent have female chairs and 3.5 per cent have female CEOs;
- On average, women have superannuation balances 45.7 per cent less than men and are more likely to be reliant on the Age Pension at age 65 years +
- Women continue to bear the greatest share of domestic work and child care;
- Australia has one of the highest rates in the OECD of dependence of women on part-time and casual jobs (with minimal career paths) to combine work and family responsibilities; and
- Women continue to have unequal access to the benefits of workplace bargaining and are over-represented in low-paid jobs dependent on minimum wages and conditions.

For more information go to

<http://actu.org.au/Campaigns/EqualPay/default.aspx> or [www.equalpayday.com.au](http://www.equalpayday.com.au) or [www.security4women.org.au](http://www.security4women.org.au)

## Equal Pay Alliance

The Equal Pay Alliance represents Australian employer and employee organisations, including business, union and community groups who have joined together to pursue practical action to ensure women's work is properly valued and that decades of inequity are brought to an end.

Recently, the barriers holding women back from earning, saving and being valued fairly at work have been examined by several government reviews and parliamentary inquiries.

Removing these barriers requires concrete action. The Equal Pay Alliance is campaigning for the following:

- Flexible work arrangements that don't trade off wages and conditions for women and men with caring responsibilities
- Improved quality, accessible and affordable childcare including out of school hours care
- Improved equal employment opportunity practices in workplaces
- Meaningful reporting by employers of equal pay and employment opportunities
- A greater role for government agencies in promoting and implementing equal pay and employment opportunity programs in workplaces
- Proper valuation and funding of wages and conditions for work traditionally carried out by women
- More opportunities to build skills and participate in the workforce
- Addressing the superannuation gap between men and women

## Pay Equity Timeline

- 1912 Women's minimum wage set at 54% of men's wages
- 1950 Women's minimum wage set at 75% of men's wages
- 1972 ACTU test case establishes principle of 'equal pay for work of equal value'
- 1986 Affirmative Action Act (Equal Employment Opportunity for Women) introduced
- 1999 Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act (EOWA) introduced
- 2009
- Australia's first Paid Parental Leave scheme
  - Review of EOWA and Sex Discrimination Act
  - Pay Equity Inquiry launched
  - Fair Work Act defines equal pay more broadly as 'equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value'
  - BPW Australia and ACTU form Equal Pay Alliance to address the pay gap and invite businesses, unions, community groups and women's organisations to join.
- 2011 ASX Corporate Governance Gender Diversity Principles and Recommendations introduced.
- 2012
- Australian Services Union wins national Social and Community Services Pay Equity Case, properly valuing community work in the social and disability sectors
  - Dad and Partner Pay Scheme introduced
  - Workplace Gender Equality Act introduced
- 2013
- Australian Council of Trade Unions launches the 'Time To Care' Campaign to improve work and family balance options for employees
  - United Voice launches equal pay case for childcare workers.
  - National Pay Equity Forum: focus on small business, hosted by eS4W and Office for Women
- 2014
- Workplace Gender Equality Agency Small Business Project: assisting small business address workplace gender equality
  - ACCI Women's Empowerment Principles: 'Equality means business' event

<sup>i</sup> [http://www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au/oirwww/Employment\\_info/Pay\\_equity.page](http://www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au/oirwww/Employment_info/Pay_equity.page)

<sup>ii</sup> [http://www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au/oirwww/Employment\\_info/Pay\\_equity.page](http://www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au/oirwww/Employment_info/Pay_equity.page)

<sup>iii</sup> July 2014 WGEA stats at a glance viewed at [https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Stats\\_at\\_a\\_Glance.pdf](https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Stats_at_a_Glance.pdf)