



JULIE COLLINS MP

Minister for Community Services
Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development
Minister for the Status of Women

MEDIA RELEASE

A landmark decision for women and gender equality

New legislation supporting gender equality in the workplace which passed through the Parliament last night is a landmark decision for women.

Minister for the Status of Women, Julie Collins, welcomed the passage of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Bill 2012 as another key reform to advance gender equality.

“This legislation will go a long way to promoting the cultural change necessary to create true gender equality in our workplaces,” Ms Collins said.

“It will support businesses to achieve this cultural change and they will reap the rewards of having diverse and equal workplaces.

“Improving women’s workforce participation is fundamental to closing the gender pay gap and essential to maintaining Australia’s place as one of the strongest performing economies in the world.

“It’s estimated that if we close the gap between men’s and women’s workforce participation we can increase Gross Domestic Product by up to 13 per cent.

“After voting against the bill in the House of Representatives, the Coalition in the Senate moved amendments, continuing their obstruction of this reform aimed at promoting gender equality at work.”

The new Act will be called the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, and the Equal Opportunity in the Workplace Agency will be called the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

The Act will assist in closing the gender pay gap, with Australian women still earning 17.5 per cent less than men.

It will also cover both women and men and will give all parents access and options in balancing paid work and caring obligations.

“The new Act will simplify the reporting and monitoring of gender equality in our workplaces,” Ms Collins said.

“In addition, employers will be able to call on specialised assistance through extra resources the Government is providing the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

“Smaller organisations with fewer than 100 employees are not required to report, but will be able to access advice and education to promote gender equality in their workplaces.

“The Gillard Government is determined to improve women’s economic security and this begins with fair and equitable treatment in the workplace.”

More information is available at www.fahcsia.gov.au

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