

Workplace Gender Equality:

gender pay equity and flexible working arrangements to support all workers with family or caring responsibilities

economic Security4Women welcomed the passage of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Amendment Bill 2012 through the House of Representatives in June 2012.

The [legislation](#) will see EOWA renamed the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, reflecting a shift in focus from equal opportunity for women to equality between the genders.

These long overdue reforms will lead to a greater commitment from business, both large and small; to ensure that gender equality is central to all aspects of employment.

The proposed legislation will promote equal remuneration between women and men and the changes will also encourage employers to provide flexible working arrangements that allow men, as well as women, to meet family and caring responsibilities.

The amendments are needed to increase the participation of women in the workforce. They will promote the need for all workers are able to add to and share the family and care work while they compete fairly in the labour market. No longer will women be easily discriminated against because of their family's care requirements.

For business, the reporting requirements will provide the feedback businesses need in order to address barriers to the participation of women in the workforce and to maximise the productivity of all current and potential employees.

And for small business, the enhanced functions of the Agency will mean these businesses can benefit from advice and assistance to ensure they can compete with large businesses, for skilled women workers who are looking for flexible working arrangements and pay equity.

However, eS4W will continue to work for the elimination of disincentives to the participation of women in the workforce.

We need

- improved access to flexible working arrangements, especially for women returning from parental leave;
- the introduction of working arrangements that support all workers to meet their family and other caring needs;
- policies and programs that encourage women and girls to get skills and training in well paid occupations and industries that today remain dominated by men; and
- equal pay for men and women doing work of equal or comparable value whether the work is similar or not.

Our national productivity and competitiveness depends on this. The amendments to this legislation go some way to achieving this.

eS4W contributed to these amendments by taking part in the extensive review and consultation process that included employers, business groups, employee organisations and other women's groups. You can read our submission here [eS4W-EOWWA-Submission-20120320.pdf](#)

eS4W looks forward to continuing to support the Agency and to work with it to achieve better gender equality outcomes for women and men. The Bill must now be passed by the Senate before becoming law.