

MEDIA ALERT

1st SEPTEMBER 2014

Equal Pay Day 2014:

Female friendly workplaces good for big and small businesses – and they offer more than equal pay

- **Small business performs well on pay equity**
- **Large business performs well on flexibility and parental leave**
- **Supporting women at work makes business sense – regardless of organisation size**

To recognise Equal Pay Day 2014, economic Security4Women (eS4W) will launch a short animated video “Family Friendly Workplaces: Good for business, good for you”.

The Gender Pay Gap has increased to 18.2 per cent. If compared across employer size, it is usually lower in businesses with less than 20 employeesⁱ, however, larger businesses are more likely to offer female and family friendly workplaces.

Small business statistics indicate

- Larger businesses are more likely to have more employees on flexible working arrangementsⁱⁱ
- The level of awareness of either the Right to Request extensions to unpaid parental leave, or to flexible working arrangements, increases with employer size
- Furthermore, fewer employees in small business have access to employer provided paid parental leaveⁱⁱⁱ.
 - Almost half (46 per cent) of eligible mothers working in the private sector had access to employer paid leave however this falls to 8 per cent in businesses of fewer than 20 employees.

“We want to support the employers who value their female staff and offer them ways to provide female friendly and family friendly workplaces. After all, increasing the workforce participation of women will increase the nation’s productivity; good for business, good for all” said Ms Sandra Cook the chair of (eS4W) a national alliance of women’s organisations,

Last year economic eS4W co-hosted a National Pay Equity Forum that focused on small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and was an opportunity for representatives of small business, employees, women’s organisations, academics with expertise in pay equity and in human resource management, and public sector agencies, to improve their understanding of pay equity challenges and useful ways forward.

An important theme in the discussion was that SMEs often unknowingly contribute to workplace gender inequality through their everyday practices and the most useful future work would be in improving understanding of the ‘business case’ for equity in the workplace and practical actions employers can take to improve equality, especially in valuing and rewarding work.

Since then, eS4W and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) have partnered to practically assist small business on gender equality and eS4W has developed resources targeted to the SME sector, recently launching an online employment negotiation checklist for women useful also for employers to ensure they are negotiating a fair outcome for their female employees.

[Family Friendly Workplaces: Good for business, good for you](#) will be launched on Tuesday 2nd September at NAB Docklands

[economic Security4Women \(eS4W\)](#) is an alliance of women's organisations united in the belief that economic wellbeing and financial security are essential for women and will enable women of all ages to have an equal place in society.

Media contact: Sally Jope Executive Officer

M 0423 198 567

E executiveofficer@security4women.org.au

ⁱ A gap of 9.7 per cent for organisations with less than 20 employees compared to 11.5 per cent for larger organisations based on ABS, *Employee Earnings and Hours*, Cat. No. 6306.0, May 2012, Average weekly total cash earnings

ⁱⁱ **Flexible Working Arrangements by size of business**

Businesses offering:	0–4 persons (%)	5–19 persons (%)	20–199 persons (%)	200 or more persons (%)
Flexible working hours	47.5	64.7	69.6	88.1
Ability to buy extra annual leave, cash out annual leave or take leave without pay	11.6	28.2	48.1	71.5
Selection of own roster of shifts	19.1	27.5	28.3	33.2
Job sharing	7.1	16.5	20.0	40.2
Ability for staff to work from home	21.8	17.7	32.6	57.9
Flexible use of personal sick, unpaid or compassionate leave	17.0	34.2	60.0	84.7

Employee working arrangements by employment size, 2010–11– May 2012

Source: ABS, *Australian Small Business Key Statistics and Analysis December 2012*, Cat. No. 8167.0, Department of Innovation

ⁱⁱⁱ Almost half (46 per cent) of eligible mothers working in the private sector had access to employer paid leave however this falls to 8 per cent in businesses of fewer than 20 employees