

Media release

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The cost of being female: 64 extra days at work

- Don't assume pay equity is not a problem in your organisation
- Employers urged to do a pay gap analysis

Tuesday 3 September 2013 marks 'Equal Pay Day', a symbolic reminder of the additional 64 days from 1 July that the average woman has to work to earn what the average man took home the previous financial year. The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) is calling on employers to help close the pay gap.

The Equal Pay Day calculation is based on the current national gender pay gap - 17.5%,ⁱ which equates to the average full-time woman earning \$266.20 less each week than the average full-time working man (\$1252.20 compared to \$1518.40, an annual difference of \$13,842.40).

Helen Conway, WGEA Director, said the national gender pay gap is a high-level figure impacted by industrial segregation and pay inequities at the organisation level and job level.

"People often ask, 'does this mean employers pay women less than men for doing the exact same job?' While that may be true in some instances, the issue is more complicated. An organisation may pay women and men doing the same jobs the same amounts, but have an organisation-wide gender pay gap because women are under-represented in management, and over-represented in lower-paid roles.

Ms Conway said the uneven spread of women and men across industries also plays a part.

"Workers in female-dominated industries tend to receive lower wages than those in male-dominated industries such as mining."

Disaggregating the national gender pay gap across industries shows us that the female-dominated health care and social assistance industry has the highest gender pay gap (32.3%, up from 31.3% in May 2012), followed by finance and insurance (31.4% down from 32.7%) and professional, scientific and technical services (30.1% up 3 percentage points from 27.1%).

From next year, non-public sector employers with 100 or more staff will be required by legislation to report on remuneration data broken down by gender, the existence of any remuneration policy or strategy, whether such a policy or strategy includes specific gender pay equity objectives whether a gender remuneration gap analysis has been undertaken, and, if so, when it was undertaken, and what actions were taken as a result. This will give employers useful data to assist them identify whether they have a gender pay gap WGEA will use this data to create educational benchmarks so employers can assess how they compare to their peers and pinpoint areas for improvement.

“If employers committed to addressing the gender pay gap at an occupational and organisational level, we could expect to see some reduction in the national gender pay gap which would result in greater economic security for women during their working lives and in retirement,” Ms Conway said.

“Employers will benefit by attracting and retaining talented staff, reducing their turnover and accessing a larger pool of talent,” Ms Conway said.

What can employers do?

- Undertake a payroll analysis to identify and eliminate any occupational gender pay gap (i.e. between women and men doing the same or similar jobs) and set goals for decreasing any organisational gender pay gap (which may be a result of a lack of women in senior roles). See [WGEA's Payroll Analysis Tool](#) and [guidelines](#).
- Examine whether HR processes, including those around recruitment, performance assessment and recognition, lead to unequal outcomes between genders: e.g. are men more likely to be awarded bonuses or pay increases than women. See WGEA's [Equal remuneration between women and men](#) for advice.
- Increase the promotion of women in to senior roles. For advice on how to do this see [WGEA's target setting tool](#) and [guidelines](#).
- Eliminate gender bias in job evaluation to ensure that female-dominated roles are rewarded on the same basis as male-dominated roles requiring similar skills. See [Australian Standard on Gender Inclusive Job Evaluation and Grading](#) and [WGEA's guide to the Standard](#).
- Provide transparency in relation to wage brackets/salary bands
- Create a gender inclusive workplace culture at all levels of the organisation. [WGEA's employee opinion survey](#) can be used to assess employee perceptions of gender equality within an organisation.
- In male dominated industries, work with industry associations and educational institutions to source highly-skilled women and ensure women know the variety of career options that are available to them from an early age. See [Australian Human Rights Commission's Women in Male Dominated Industries Toolkit](#).
- Respond to the growing demand for more flexible work by enabling employees – women and men – to access flexible working arrangements. See WGEA's advice on implementing [flexible working arrangements to support employees with family or caring responsibilities](#), [creating flexible work by design](#), and [managing pregnancy, potential pregnancy, parental leave and breastfeeding](#).

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For more information contact

Clare Buttner, Communications Manager
+61 (0)415 932 936
clare.buttner@wgea.gov.au

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency is an Australian Government statutory agency charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces. The Agency is responsible for administering the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012. The Agency's vision is for women and men to be equally represented, valued and rewarded in the workplace. The Agency was formerly known as the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency. More information is available at www.wgea.gov.au

ⁱ Calculated using average weekly full-time, ordinary time earnings data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, released on 15 August 2013 (Cat. No. 6302.0).