

Media release

20 February 2014

National gender pay gap at 17.1%, employers tackle pay inequity

New figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics¹ show that, on average, full-time working women's earnings are 17.1% less per week than full-time working men's earnings (a difference that equates to \$262.50 per week).

This gap in male and female earnings has decreased slightly since the last set of ABS figures were released in August 2013, when the gap was 17.5%. Women's earnings have increased at a slightly higher rate than men's over the past 12 months: 3.5% compared to 3%.

The national gender pay gap has hovered between 15% and 18% for around two decades and is influenced by a variety of factors including industrial and occupational segregation, a lack of women in leadership, the fact that women still do most of society's unpaid caring, a lack of senior part-time and flexible roles (which disadvantages women who are more likely to work part-time or flexibly), and direct or indirect discrimination.

"This persistent pay gap is both concerning and frustrating. And sadly, there is a pay gap in favour of men in every single industry," said Helen Conway, Director of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

"Some of the highest gender pay gaps are found in female dominated industries including health care and social assistance and finance and insurance services," Ms Conway said.

However, Ms Conway said she is pleased that there is evidence that employers are taking steps to ensure that they are paying their staff fairly. In a WGEA survey conducted last year (2,594 respondents) one third of respondents said they had conducted a gender pay gap analysis and a quarter of organisations have undertaken an analysis in the previous 12 months. One in two organisations said they had plans to conduct a gender pay gap analysis in the coming 12 months.

"It's fair to assume employers don't deliberately set out to discriminate between women and men, but many organisations simply don't realise they have a gender pay gap," Ms Conway said. "I say to organisations who think pay equity isn't an issue for them, 'how do you know?'. Unless you've analysed your payroll data, any assertion that you don't have a problem is uninformed."

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics' Average Weekly Full-Time Earnings data (cat. No. 6302.0)

Two types of pay gaps can be uncovered through a gender pay gap analysis using a tool such as WGEA's free payroll analysis tool:

- pay gaps between women and men doing the same or similar work
- organisation-wide (or department-wide) gender pay gaps resulting from unequal gender representation at different levels of the organisation (or department).

The professional, scientific and technical services industry is the most proactive in addressing pay equity with 58.3% of organisations reporting they had conducted a gender pay gap analysis. This industry has the third-largest gender pay gap of all industries (26.6%). The second and third most proactive industries are financial and insurance services (54.3% have conducted a gender pay gap analysis) and rental, hiring and real estate services (where 53.2% of organisations have conducted a gender pay gap analysis). These industries have the largest (31.9%) and fourth largest (24.9%) gender pay gaps, respectively, of all industries.

Of those organisations that said they intend to conduct a gender pay gap analysis within 12 months, financial and insurance services organisations was most likely to have such plans (66.3%), followed by the professional, scientific and technical services industry (65.3%).

WGEA is currently undertaking a project to provide business leaders and HR professionals with practical tools to manage the end-to-end process of pay equity. In September this year, the Agency will launch a practical guide to managing pay equity, a national workshop series on pay equity, an updated pay equity calculator and manual, a series of case studies and a directors' toolkit.

These resources are being developed in collaboration with leading employers, including KPMG, Shell, Commonwealth Bank, St Barbara, Mercer, Network Ten, Telstra and Thoughtworks. The release of these resources will be supported by a national employer-focused campaign.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency is also running Pay Equity Workshops for employers in Sydney and Melbourne in May. Visit www.wgea.gov.au for details.

See next page for pay gaps by industry

Learn more about pay equity at WGEA's website

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Pay gaps by industry

Industry	Nov-12 (%)	Nov-13 (%)	Annual change (%)
Financial and insurance services	33.6	31.9	-1.7
Health care and social assistance	29.6	31.7	2.1
Professional, scientific and technical services	26.3	26.6	0.3
Rental, hiring and real estate services	27.0	24.9	-2.1
Mining	22.2	21.7	-0.5
Construction	18.2	20.1	1.9
Information media and telecommunications	20.6	18.6	-2.0
Manufacturing	17.7	16.8	-0.9
Arts and recreation services	16.1	14.2	-1.9
Retail trade	9.6	12.9	3.3
Transport, postal and warehousing	16.2	12.7	-3.5
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	12.9	12.4	-0.5
Education and training	12.1	11.5	-0.6
Administrative and support services	20.0	8.3	-11.7
Accommodation and food services	5.2	8.2	3.0
Other services	11.2	8.0	-3.2
Public administration and safety	7.5	7.3	-0.2
Wholesale trade	16.7	7.2	-9.5
All industries (trend)	17.6	17.1	-0.5

About the Workplace Gender Equality Agency

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