

Thursday, 24 August 2023

## It's (Un)Equal Pay Day

The average woman in Australia effectively works an extra 56 days of the year to earn the same as the average man.

Today marks Equal Pay Day, a symbolic day dedicated to raising awareness of the gender pay gap.

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average earnings for men and women, expressed as a percentage of men's average earnings.

Today the gender pay gap sits at 13.3% percent. This is the lowest on record, falling 0.6% percentage points from the pre pandemic level of 13.9% in November 2019. However, this measure does not include part time work and discretionary payments like bonuses and overtime. When these are factored in, it is as high as 28.1%.

Gender pay gaps are not a comparison of job A versus job B, instead, they show the differences between average pay for men and women across workplaces, sectors or the workforce as a whole.

The February 2023 average weekly pay for men working full time was \$1,907.10. Women earned \$1,653.60 per week on average. That's a difference of \$253 every week, and \$13,183 every year. At the average rate of pay for women, that is equivalent to 8 weeks additional paid work (56 days).

Unions have long campaigned to end the gender pay gap. Significant wins in that campaign have seen the Albanese Federal Government:

- Strengthen equal pay laws to make it easier for women workers to win equal pay
- Prohibit pay secrecy clauses
- Provide access to multi-employer bargaining for sectors where the majority of workers are women, like Early Childhood Education and Care and the community sector so they can collectively negotiate for fair pay and conditions. A recent example of this is the application by three unions on behalf of early childhood education and care workers to bargain with 64 employers for better pay and conditions
- Gender equality and job security are now included as objects of the Fair Work Act.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"Some people might find it surprising that in 2023 we are still talking about a gender pay gap, over 50 years after women won the right to equal pay, but working women will know the obstacles they face all too well. Women are more likely to be in casual and insecure jobs, have disproportionate caring responsibilities and face sex discrimination and harassment in the workplace.

"There is more work to do to value the labour, skills and experience of women in our country and reduce the gender pay gap. Closing the loopholes that lead to job insecurity are essential to closing the gap".

**ENDS**

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