



Media Statement on the 2016 Gender Pay Gap & Equal Pay Day

GENDER PAY GAP STILL WITH US IN THE 21ST CENTURY

8 September 2016

BPW Australia calls on leaders in government and industry to initiate strategies to address and close the gender pay gap.

The Gender Pay Gap in 2016 stands at **16.2%** and has hovered between 15% and 19% for the past two decades (based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Average Weekly Earnings survey data). Despite the many social, legislative and technological advances of the 21st Century, pay inequality between women and men has stagnated. The 2016 figure is an improvement on the 18.2% and 17.9% Gender Pay Gaps reported in 2014 and 2015 respectively, but we still have a way to go before reaching pay equity between women and men. On average, men working full-time earned \$1,613.60 and women earned \$1,352.50, a difference of **\$261.10 per week**.

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency has nominated **8 September** as this year's Equal Pay Day. This means that women in employment in Australia must work an extra ten weeks in order to be on a par with their male counterparts' earnings in the previous financial year.

BPW Australia is working to elevate this issue on the public agenda by raising awareness about pay inequity and making 'wages' a matter of priority in public discussion. We mark Equal Pay Day as a way of drawing attention to the pay gap that exists not only in Australia but in most countries between women and men.

There is no one cause identified that creates the gap, and no one solution. Many strategies and changes in public and employer attitudes, perceptions and practices will be required in order to achieve true equality between women and men in Australia. We ask that all employers examine their current practices in areas of job creation, wage negotiation, recruitment and promotion, with an intention to address the current disparity between women and men that is occurring systematically across all areas of government and industry. Job satisfaction is in large part derived from the knowledge that an employee is valued, but unfortunately women are increasingly marginalised in casual employment, working in jobs that are not valued as highly as men's, and often restricted by a lack of workplace flexibility or access to appropriate, affordable child care.

The gender inequality in wages has a negative impact on the national economy. Governments should consider the benefits of additional taxation revenue and impact on GDP that pay equality would generate, and take advantage of Australia having one of the highest rates of educated women in the world. Australia ranks equal first with other developed countries in educational gender equality, but falls behind on gender equality for economic participation and opportunity, ranked 13th down (World Economic Forum 2013). The Grattan Institute reports that a 6% increase in women's participation in the workforce would increase the size of the Australian economy by around \$25 billion a year.

It is time to reward women's workplace participation equally for the greater benefit of the nation as a whole.

For detailed information on the pay gap go to <http://www.equalpayday.com.au/> which has been developed by BPW Australia in collaboration with the ACTU to establish the Equal Pay Alliance.

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