

**Embargoed to 6am**, Friday, 3 September 2010

## Equal Pay Day 2010: unacceptable that Australian women are earning 18% less than men

The unacceptable pay gap between Australian women and men widened in the last financial year with full-time working women earning 18% less than men, say unions.

"Today we are marking Equal Pay Day – 66 days after the end of the financial year, which is the number of extra days women would have to work to earn the same as men in this country," said ACTU President Ged Kearney on the eve of Equal Pay Day 2010.

"Women now make up half the workforce and are more skilled and educated than any other time in Australian history. Yet men are still paid more through overtime, penalty rates and bonuses. One worrying outcome is that women end up with less than half the superannuation savings of men when they retire, often after a lifetime of working and caring for family."

Ms Kearney said the pay gap has a detrimental impact across the whole economy.

- NATSEM estimates that the average Australian woman will earn almost \$1 million less over her lifetime than the average Australian man.
- Female tertiary graduates earn \$2000 less than male graduates in their first job, and \$7500 less after 5 years in the workforce.
- Women are two and a half times more likely to live in poverty in their old age than men.
- A new survey of 1100 professional women by the Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers Australia (APESMA) found that nearly half (47.4%) said their career progress had been affected by a male-dominated workplace culture.

Women earned the right to equal pay back in 1972 after decades of having their wages set at a lower rate than men, however this has not translated into a fair and equal outcome.

She said a national Equal Pay Test Case for community and social workers currently underway could start to address the massive imbalance between pay rates in male and female dominated industries where the work could be judged as equal in value.

The ACTU along with Business and Professional Women Australia is a founder of the Equal Pay Alliance of about 150 business, union, NGO and community groups. The alliance is holding events around Australia to mark Equal Pay Day (4 September).

### **MEDIA EVENT – (Un)happy hour**

**10am - Friday, 3 September 2010**

**Bella Union Bar, Trades Hall, Cnr Lygon Street & Victoria Parade, Melbourne**

**Come and help slice the Equal Pay Cake with ACTU President Ged Kearney and special guests (18% larger slice for men).**

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