

# media release



Tuesday 13 November, 2018

## Australia still has a long way to go on pay equity

The peak body for working people, the ACTU, calls for more action on pay equity and says progress is still too slow in narrowing the gender pay gap.

The Workplace Gender Equality (WGEA) report released today shows that the gender pay gap remained at an unacceptable 21.3 percent in the past year for average total remuneration, or \$25,717 p.a, despite a slight narrowing of 1.1 percentage points. At this rate it will still take 19 years to close the gap.

The WGEA report found gaps still persist in every industry, occupation, and manager category. It also found access to parental leave had not improved – with the provision of primary carer's leave actually going backwards. The ACTU calls for the concept of “primary” and “secondary” carers to be abolished and replaced by 26 weeks' paid parental leave that a family can decide to use however they want.

The consistently high gender pay gap feeds directly into alarmingly low retirement savings for many women – women are retiring with an average of 47 percent less superannuation than men.

The ACTU is calling for all political parties to commit to structural reform of Australia's workplace relations rules to make them fair for women, including overhauling the collective bargaining system, introducing ten days paid family and domestic violence leave, and introducing flexible work rights.

The ACTU has also called for stronger powers for the Fair Work Commission to proactively tackle gender inequality, including the establishment of a new expert Gender Equality Panel, giving the Commission the power to hear and determine sexual harassment and sex discrimination claims, and implementing stronger pay equity provisions.

For more detail on how the ACTU plans to change the rules for working women, visit:  
[https://www.australianunions.org.au/change\\_the\\_rules\\_for\\_working\\_women](https://www.australianunions.org.au/change_the_rules_for_working_women)

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

“Working women power this country – through both paid and unpaid labour.

“A gap in pay between men and women of \$25,717 is still too high – there should be equal pay for men and women.

“Kelly O’Dwyer is in the rare position of being both the Minister for Women and the Minister for Industrial Relations. She has a unique opportunity to do more for women in this country. Our workplace rules and structures have been failing working women. Women face an unfair, uphill battle to achieve parity in the workplace. Women are paid 21.3 percent less than men, and are retiring with far less, often spending their final days in poverty.

“The ACTU expects all political leaders to make closing the gender pay gap a priority and we know that changing the rules in our workplaces is key in making that happen.”

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