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## Multi-employer bargaining will tackle gender pay gap

The introduction of the Secure Jobs, Better Pay Bill will restart progress on closing the gender pay gap through multi-employer bargaining and strengthen equal pay laws, making it easier for women, especially in women-dominated industries, to address systemic unequal pay.

An ACTU report released this morning “Reducing the Gender Pay Gap with multi-employer bargaining” outlines how the IR bill will make a substantial difference in closing the gender pay gap, which has recently expanded after stalling for the past five years.

While the Bill strengthens equal pay laws the report also finds that improving collective bargaining will also make a substantial contribution to closing the pay gap. Women on collective agreements currently earn \$102.60 per week more when women who are not, and workplaces with a collective agreement have lower gender pay gaps than those without.

The Bill’s main multi-employer bargaining streams would also help close the gender pay gap. Of the eight industries with the highest gender pay gaps, seven would likely be covered by single-interest multi-employer bargaining, while sectors like aged care, early childhood education and care and administration and support services – which would benefit from the supported stream, are dominated by systemically underpaid women.

The report also finds that the 12 countries with higher rates of multi-employer bargaining than Australia have an average gender pay gap of 10.5 per cent compared to Australia’s of 15.3 per cent, using the OECD measure of median full-time earnings from 2021.

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

“Multi-employer bargaining, and especially the single interest and supported streams, are critical for closing the gender pay gap.

“Giving more women – both in industries with larger pay gaps and industries with more women – access to bargaining benefits those workers, but also the economy.

“With all four bargaining streams intact, this Bill will empower women to fight for and win pay rises, and to address systemic underpayment across the economy.

“Fighting for equal pay is currently a lengthy, expensive process which rarely results in underpayment being addressed. This Bill would make it simpler, cheaper and easier for women across the economy to fight to close pay gaps. Underpayment of women is an anchor on both women’s equality and also on economic growth. It must end, and this Bill will be a significant step in the right direction.”

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