

Thursday 26 November 2020

Employers must step up to close gender pay gap

More than 45 per cent of employers who take the preliminary step of analysing the gender pay gap in their workplace take no follow up action, according to data released this morning by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

The data covers April 2019 to March 2020 and shows that before the pandemic hit, employers had become complacent about equal pay.

WGEA data shows a disparity in full-time incomes of \$15,144, climbing to \$25,534 per year, or 20.1 per cent, once bonuses and penalty rates are included.

As noted in the ACTU's recent report on the impact of the pandemic on women, overall the gender pay gap is actually 30 per cent, factoring in the disproportionate impact of insecure work, fewer hours of work, lower hourly earnings, and less income from bonuses and overtime experienced by women.

The Morrison Government has consistently opposed changes that would give the FWC greater powers to ensure pay equity, as well as a raft of other measures like the living wage, paid Family and Domestic Violence leave, access to secure and enforceable family friendly working arrangements and expanding paid parental leave which would all contribute to closing the gender pay gap.

Quotes attributable to Michele O'Neil:

"This is not news to anyone. We don't need more studies, we don't need analysis from employers, we need action, backed by the Federal Government, to close the pay gap.

"Employers paying lip service to the pay gap and not following up does nothing to end discrimination and does nothing to address the problem.

"We need committed action from employers to work with unions and close the pay gap.

"The federal government has a role to play here – the recovery presents an opportunity to address insecure work and take a real step towards pay equity, instead the Government has continued to ignore the crisis.

"The WGEA is warning that without action from the Morrison Government the impact of this pandemic on women could set us back a decade. We simply cannot allow that to happen.

"We have released a detailed plan outlining pragmatic changes the Morrison Government could adopt to ensure that the recovery creates jobs for women as well as men and closes the pay gap. We stand ready to work with the Government to ensure that women are not left further behind."

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