

Tuesday 8 March 2022

Another IWD waiting for action from Morrison

Australian women today mark another International Women's Day waiting for action from the Morrison Government.

At every moment that Australian women have needed action from the Prime Minister he has either done nothing, deflected responsibility or blocked changes proposed by others.

Despite how much the Prime Minister talks up his commitment to women, under his leadership women in the workplace:

- Have a 2 in 3 chance of experiencing sexual harassment in a current or former workplace.
- No guaranteed right to paid family and domestic violence leave, despite a spike in family and domestic violence during the pandemic.
- Rely on the second worst paid parental leave scheme in the developed world, according to the OECD.
- Pay for some of the most expensive early childhood education and care in the world – with early childhood educators being extremely low paid.
- Earn on average \$483.30 less per week than a man and retire with half the amount of super.
- Are more likely to be in low wage, casual, part-time and insecure work

When all types of work, bonuses and overtime are considered the gender pay gap is over 30 per cent.

61 per cent of those who rely on Awards or minimum wages are women, and women dominate sectors, including aged care, early childhood education and health, that are systemically underpaid.

The union movement calls on the Morrison Government to act urgently to make workplaces safer for women and close the gender pay gap by:

- Introducing stronger equal pay laws in the Fair Work Act
- Paying superannuation on parental leave
- Implementing all 55 recommendations of the Respect@Work report, including a positive duty on employers to prevent sexual harassment.
- Legislating 10 days paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave into the National Employment Standards

- Introducing free, universal, accessible, and high-quality early childhood education and care delivered by properly paid securely employed educators

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

“Australian women are spending another International Women’s Day waiting for action from the Morrison Government.

“The Prime Minister has had dozens of opportunities to enact change for women over the last year - including by legislating all recommendations of Respect@Work, regulating the overuse of insecure work, increasing the minimum wage to a liveable wage, and introducing free and accessible early childhood education and care – instead at every turn he shrugged off responsibility, did nothing, or blocked progress.

“After nearly a decade in power, this Government has had plenty of press conferences claiming that they support women, but we have very little to show for it.

“The Morrison Government has been talking up its record on closing the gender pay gap this week - which still stands at 30 per cent when all types of work are considered.

“Under this Government women dominated sectors including health and aged care and early childhood education, continue to be systematically underpaid and 61 per cent of those reliant on minimum wage and Award reliant are women. The Morrison Government could act to address inequality and close the gender pay gap but is refusing to do so.”

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