



Women dominate employment in \$12 billion per annum industry

The pharmacy industry generates a revenue of over \$12 billion annually and employs over 46 000 people, mostly women. There is an economic imperative to ensure that this industry continues to thrive in Australia as well as offering the potential to increase female workforce participation.

Childcare, maternity leave and employment flexibility are key enablers for women wishing to work in the community pharmacies. Pay equity and continuing education were rated lower as barriers to women's employment than these factors according to a survey of women owners and salaried pharmacists. These factors are particularly important for the pharmacy sector as over 85% of all persons engaged in community pharmacy are female.

“The over representation of women in this sector and the challenges imposed by the long opening hours of pharmacies has ensured that pharmacy owners focus on what is important for women wishing to return to the workforce and this is particularly important during a time of global skills shortages in both community and hospital pharmacists.”
Committee Chair, Ms Sharryn Jackson said.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia will appear before the House Employment and Workplace Relations Committee in Committee Room 1R3 Parliament House Canberra on Thursday 5 February from 11.15 am to discuss this and other issues relevant to pay equity and women's participation in the workforce.

Discussions should also cover: current structural arrangements in the negotiation of wages that may impact disproportionately on women, the adequacy of recent and current equal remuneration provisions in state and federal workplace relations legislation; and the need for further legislative reform to address pay equity in Australia.

The Committee will continue to welcome submissions to the inquiry.

Further details on the inquiry, including the terms of reference, background documents, membership of the Committee and advice on making submissions can be obtained on the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/ewr>, by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4162 or emailing ewr.reps@aph.gov.au. This hearing will be webcast live (audio only) on: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair, Sharryn Jackson, on (02) 6277 4044
For background information, contact the Committee Secretary, on (02) 6277 4162