



Community & Public Sector Union

Stephen Jones • National Secretary

10th March 2009

Committee Chair Ms Sharryn Jackson MP
Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations
House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Dear Ms Jackson

Inquiry into pay equity and associated issues related to increasing female participation in the workforce

The Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) welcomed the opportunity to appear before the inquiry on 26th September 2008 and contribute to the valuable work of the Committee.

In the course of the public hearing, the Committee made a request for the CPSU to provide further information on the ability of women in the Australian Public Service (APS) to access flexible working conditions such as working from home and job sharing. Access to flexible working conditions is fundamental to increasing female participation in the workforce and promoting a work/life balance for women and men in the APS and the wider labour market.

Given the importance of this issue, the CPSU included a series of questions around flexible working conditions in our annual women's survey – the *What Women Want* Survey.

The survey results reflect what the CPSU outlined in its substantive submission and in the public hearing. Women working in the APS have a desire to have flexible working arrangements and often have an entitlement to such arrangements, however there is still a very low level of utilisation of flexible working arrangements.

The reasons for women not accessing flexible working arrangements or leave entitlements are varied, with two in five women feeling that taking time out for family reasons disadvantaged their career prospects.

The survey results show that flexible working conditions are important to the majority of women in the APS. The results also show that work still needs to be done to close the gap between the large number of women who think these arrangements are important and the small number of women who access these arrangements.

For more detailed information on the attitude of women in the APS towards flexible working conditions and for broader information about what modern women want from their working lives please see the *2008 CPSU What Women Want Survey Report* that accompanies this letter.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Jones', written in a cursive style.

Stephen Jones
CPSU National Secretary