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Lincolne Scott

Ms Cheryl Scarlett
Inquiry Secretary
Standing Committee
Employment and Workplace Relations
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Australia

Pay equity and associated issues related to increasing female participants in the workforce

Dear Cheryl

I have included the points you required a response to below:

- The adequacy of current data to reliably monitor employment changes that may impact on pay equity issues;

Response: There is sufficient data available from both Government and other sources to understand issues that may impact on pay equity issues. It is important that organisations produce reports on a regular (monthly basis) on their workforce so that trends in pay inequity can be identified early, and corrected.

- The need for education and information among employers, employees and trade unions in relation to pay equity issues;

Response: The EOWA provides both information and education on pay equity issues in relation to women. It is important that all organisations are reporting to EOWA on this, and ensuring that pay inequity is eventually eliminated.

- Current structural arrangements in the negotiation of wages that may impact disproportionately on women;

Response: It is important that interview panels are educated so that there is no bias towards male candidates when it comes to negotiating salary. There is definitely a weak link here in relation to how well female candidates fare versus male candidates. Professionals are as vulnerable here as non-professionals, as some of the professional industries have high male:female ratio, particularly in senior positions, as evidenced in recent EOWA report.

- The adequacy of recent and current equal remuneration provisions in state and federal workplace relations legislation

Response: It is the enforcement of the legislation that may be an issue, particularly for lower paid, casual and part-time workers. Effort should be focussed on monitoring of workplace agreements, and taking employers to task when not compliant. Professional workers are not as vulnerable here.

- The adequacy of current arrangements to ensure fair access to training and promotion for women who have taken maternity leave and/or returned to work part time and/or sought flexible work hours;

Response: EOWA has raised awareness of these issues, and for higher paid workers it probably is not so much an issue as it is for lower paid workers. Therefore, legislation around how we manage maternity leave and return to work (which should include clauses about rights to training and fairness in promotion) is the only thing that will improve the situation overall.

- The need for further legislative reform to address pay equity in Australia.

Response: There should be legislation on Parental leave to bring us into line with other OECD countries

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Breed Lewis".

Breed Lewis
Group Talent Manager