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Central Queensland  
UNIVERSITY

The Secretary  
Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations  
House of Representatives  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback to the enquiry regarding pay equity.

CQUniversity is committed to the principle of equal employment opportunity. CQUniversity is required to comply with the current legislation *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*. A synopsis of the Central Queensland University EOWA Report submitted for 2007 indicates that at CQUniversity, women comprise 52% Senior General Management; 36% of Senior Academic Management; 67% of General Staff and 46% of Academic Staff. Within the Senior Executive Staff cohort, women comprise 50%.

Along with the annual report to Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA), CQUniversity also participates in the Universities' Human Resource Benchmarking Program conducted by the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) that benchmarks our data against a number of other Australian Universities. The Universities' HR Benchmarking Program provides CQUniversity with a comparative analysis of our data with data from other Australian universities. One of the key results of this benchmarking analysis is a comparison of female/male ratios across a number of workforce classifications. This result indicates that CQUniversity is performing in the top quartile in terms of gender representation across most factor, the exception being female academics employed at Academic Level D and E. CQUniversity demonstrates a commitment to equal employment opportunity and the principle of merit based selection decisions.

Whilst CQUniversity can demonstrate a set of policies and principles that support equality, it should be recognised that there are many factors influencing the career paths and participation rates of female academics, and in particular, those balancing parenting and academia. Some of these factors include issues such as child caring support by partners and or extended family, academic and peer support by partner in areas such as research and publishing, the mobility of the academic and their family for career progression, at what stage in their career they have their family, the level of domestic responsibility that they have, and the ability to publish and present research at international conferences. These factors are

often outside of the direct control of the university, and an increase in legislation would not necessarily result in any improvements in this area. However, an increase in academic debate and resulting research, such as that recently prepared for the Annual Conference of the Australian Institute of Family Studies, Melbourne 9-11 July 2008 by Professor Maureen Baker, Professor of Sociology, University Of Auckland, "The Family Life of Academics: Gendered Priorities and Institutional Constraints"

[http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.shtml?filename\\_num=222962](http://www.apo.org.au/linkboard/results.shtml?filename_num=222962) will assist higher education institutions to meet the needs of both the academic and the university. It is also worth noting that sharing ideas across universities and other work places, on strategies or programs that assist females in general and female academics in particular, to reach their full potential can be valuable by the exposure to new ideas.

Factors such as market demand and supply for academics will require universities to be even more creative in the recruitment, retention and advancement of female academics. Regional universities may be even more affected by economic pressures such as those fuelled by the current mining booms in Queensland and Western Australia. Issues such as the ageing of the academic workforce as the 'baby boomers' head for retirement will compound the issue of having, in our employ, suitably trained and experienced staff. The ability to not only attract, but to retain good staff, will become increasingly critical to the long term ability of the university to deliver quality teaching and research to our students and the community. It is more likely that these market forces, rather than legislative reform, will drive universities such as CQUniversity to look at other alternatives to assist staff, in particular females, to reach their full potential.

CQUniversity has a number of strategies in place to assist female staff in their careers. For example, CQUniversity initiated in 2007, an Early Career Academic Program to assist early career academics to develop a comprehensive suite of skills, knowledge and abilities as well as a range of mentoring and networking opportunities. Whilst this program is inclusive, the outcomes indicate particular value for female academics. The university has a number of flexible work arrangements available including paid carers leave and paid maternity leave up to 20 weeks with an option of a further 32 weeks unpaid leave. Other flexible work initiatives include the potential to work part time and to job share.

However, it is recognised that in the future, further development is required to develop and implement appropriate policies and initiatives that, enable the staff and organisations to achieve flexible and sustainable workplaces. An example of this change in mind set is that there is probably still a barrier for managers, in particular, who may need to work part time to balance their work/family requirements to equitable promotion opportunities. Attitudinal changes require thinking outside the square, creativity and flexibility. An undersupply of talented people may be the precursor of such change. As stated previously, other factors such as the aging work force and increased demand for academics will require all universities to have sound attraction and retention strategies in place for all employees.

It is recognised that pay equity is also about the potential undervaluing of work that is traditionally viewed as "women's work". At CQUniversity, general staff positions within the 9 level Higher Education Worker (HEW) structure and the 7 level Research Support Only Worker (RWS) structure are evaluated using the Hay job evaluation methodology. Senior management positions above the 9 level HEW structure are evaluated by an external agency using the Mercer job evaluation methodology. This allows for all general staff and senior management positions to be analysed and evaluated against a set of factors which are present,

though in varying degrees, in all jobs. These factors cover aspects of knowledge, problem solving and accountability. The job evaluation methodology minimises the risk of undervaluing or overvaluing positions and assists in more equitable pay outcomes. General staff positions are also 'sorethumbed' or compared with other positions within similar job families throughout the University whilst senior management positions are compared with other positions across the tertiary education sector. However, it is recognised that the job evaluation methodology does not take into consideration market forces that can have a significant impact on remuneration. CQUniversity currently has a number of positions that receive a market loading allowance including trades, technical support and IT positions. The reality is that CQUniversity operates in a domestically and globally competitive environment where skill shortages and staff attraction and retention factors can influence remuneration strategy.

In summary, CQUniversity recognises the need for legislation to ensure equality in society. However, it is our consideration that other factors facing higher education will require universities to be even more creative in their ability to attract and retain good staff.

Yours sincerely



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