

A

APESMA Submission to:

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment and
Workplace Relations

**INQUIRY INTO PAY EQUITY AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES
RELATED TO INCREASING FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN THE
WORKFORCE**

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1. Background on APESMA

- 1.1. The Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers, Australia (APESMA) is a union for professional employees registered under the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*. The Association has over 20,000 members and 10,000 affiliate/student members in all states and territories of Australia. APESMA members are predominantly technical professionals including engineers, scientists, veterinarians, surveyors, architects, pharmacists, information technology (IT) professionals, managers and transport professionals.
- 1.2. APESMA conducts regular surveys of technical professionals on topics including remuneration and women in the professions. The surveys (particularly those on remuneration) are often conducted in cooperation with a relevant professional association, with respondents drawn from APESMA and/or the relevant cooperating associations' membership (further details provided in the section "Information on APESMA Data Sources"). This submission draws largely on those data sources. The Association hopes that the results of the research contained herein provide the Committee with a greater understanding of the gender pay gap in technical professions.

2. Summary

- 2.1. Urgent action is required to eliminate the gender pay gap, retain skilled and experienced women in the workforce and enable more women to progress through to the senior levels of technical professions.
- 2.2. Nearly forty years after the equal pay cases a gender pay gap continues to persist amongst scientists, engineers and information technology professionals, including where men and women are undertaking work at the same responsibility level. A new approach is required to address this issue.
- 2.3. According to APESMA remuneration data discussed later in the submission, in the engineering and IT professions the gender pay gap for undertaking work at the same responsibility level was 9.7% for engineers and 5.5% for IT in 2007 at the responsibility level where the largest number of women work and was higher at more senior levels. In science the gender pay gap persists within all levels of responsibility ranging from 7.9% to 18.0% in 2007.
- 2.4. In science, an APESMA salary survey shows that, in general, the higher the proportion of women working within the particular scientific discipline, the lower the median base salary. A gender pay gap also persists within most of the various disciplines of science for which data was available.

- 2.5. According to an APESMA survey more than one in four female technical professionals report that they believe that they do not receive equal compensation for work of equal value as compared to their male professional colleagues, with an even higher result (nearly one in three) for those working at the more senior levels.
- 2.6. Women are generally concentrated in much larger proportions at the lower responsibility levels of the professions, particularly in engineering and science where the contrast between the proportion of men and women at the different levels of the profession is stark. This is likely to have a significant impact on the overall gender pay gap.
- 2.7. Community pharmacists have traditionally been more dependent on award rates of pay than other areas of APESMA membership and the gender pay gap within pharmacy has been extremely low. In the last ten years community pharmacists have had to embark on individual negotiations to prevent a fall in real wages as award/AFPC pay scale rates in real terms have decreased for pharmacists. As the pharmacy profession shifts from skills shortage to a potential future oversupply APESMA is concerned that without a reasonable safety net and greater capacity for collective bargaining a gender pay gap may become a feature of the industry, as it already is in engineering, IT and science.
- 2.8. There is evidence that the industrial relations system and the method of pay setting influence the size of the gender pay gap. The gap is lowest amongst those paid the award rate (though the rates are very low), and registered collective agreements provide a much better outcome than individual negotiations. It is therefore essential that professionals have access to an effective award safety net and fair collective bargaining.
- 2.9. The capacity of parents to balance work and family has an effect on women's career progression, workforce participation and retention in the profession. Whilst many employers are encouraging and facilitating employees' work/life balance others are not and therefore workplace conditions and rights contained in awards, the National Employment Standards and legislation are vital.

3. Recommendations

3.1. Pay equity and the gender pay gap at the workplace level

3.1.1. APESMA urges the Committee to recommend a pay equity system which includes a requirement for employers to conduct and report pay equity audits and plans.¹

3.1.2. The aim of such a system would be to identify and address pay inequity and the gender pay gap at the workplace level. Employers with more than one hundred employees must be required to set up a pay equity committee (joint management/union(s)). Where there are less than one hundred employees this should be encouraged. On an annual basis all employers with over fifty employees would be required to undertake and report to an established relevant authority, their employees and the relevant union(s) a pay equity audit and plan for addressing issues identified. Employers with under 50 employees, though not required to undertake the audit and plan, should be required to adhere to pay equity principles and an established authority must have the capacity to request an audit and plan of these employers should there be reasonable grounds to suspect that it may be necessary to redress issues of pay inequity.

3.1.3. The pay equity audits should report relevant matters including:

- Base rate and total package remuneration by gender for each responsibility level (following a job evaluation process) regardless of occupation;
- Analysis of occupational gender segregation, base rate and total package remuneration and identification of any discrepancy between male and female dominated occupations at the same responsibility level;
- The total gender pay gap regardless of responsibility level, including analysis of the causes of any gap that may exist;
- Pay equity audits should include all employees (including senior executives) and independent contractors.

3.1.4. Wages and entitlement data contained within pay equity audits should be provided in such a way that it can form part of a common database which can then be analysed at an aggregate level for the whole workforce, specific industries, professions etc.

3.1.5. Pay equity plans must address issues identified by the pay equity audit including:

- Relevant changes to the classification structure;

¹ Similar, though not the same as, that recommended by an inquiry by the QIRC which was an amended version of a system that currently operates in Quebec, Canada. The system outlined above includes the concepts of a committee conducting an audit and plan as per the system in Quebec, but also has greater reporting, enforcement and dispute resolution.. See Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (2007) *Pay Equity: Time to Act* Report of the inquiry on the impact of Work Choices on pay equity in Queensland, 28th September 2007 (available at www.qirc.qld.gov.au/inquiry/pay_equity/final/final_report.htm).

- Wage and/or entitlement adjustments deemed necessary;
- Changes in practice to address the gender pay gap including any measures to provide for greater retention, recruitment and career progression of women.

3.1.6. Any wage and/or entitlement adjustments contained within pay equity plans should be legally enforceable. Both the process and any pay and/or entitlement adjustments emanating from the audit and plan must be subject to dispute resolution procedures conducted by a pay equity tribunal with the capacity for both conciliation and arbitration. There needs to be the opportunity for both collective and individual disputes. Non compliance with either the process or the outcomes should include sanctions. The dispute resolution procedures and potential sanctions must be applicable to all employers (including those that are not required to undertake the audit and plan but are required to adhere to the principles).

3.1.7. The system should operate to ensure that no person or group of employees is disadvantaged and that any wage, allowance or other adjustments are in addition to what has previously been provided.

3.2. Pay equity at the industry or occupation level

Addressing pay equity at the workplace, whilst essential, will not comprehensively address inequities between occupational or industry groups.

3.2.1. Pay equity tribunal

3.2.1.1. The current federal legislation is not adequate in ensuring equal remuneration for work of equal value, nor for pursuing work value cases on this basis. A pay equity tribunal should be established with the capacity conduct conciliation and arbitration regarding wages and entitlements contained within any federal industrial instrument. Adjustments should be made where it can be established that a group of employees are not receiving equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value to another group of employees where the cause may include the undervaluation of work, or other reasons, relating to gender. Orders should be issued without a requirement to prove that existing wages and entitlements have been established on the basis of discrimination.

3.2.1.2. Federal government funding should be available to unions to run such pay equity cases which are deemed to have merit. The Queensland Industrial Relations Commission notes that two cases in that jurisdiction in recent years would have been unlikely to have been run without a grants program as the relevant unions had low levels of membership in the particular relevant areas.²

² Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (2007) *Pay Equity: Time to Act* Report of the inquiry on the impact of Work Choices on pay equity in Queensland, 28th September 2007, p48 (available at www.qirc.qld.gov.au/inquiry/pay_equity/final/final_report.htm).

3.2.2. Industry/profession investigation, recommendations and committees

3.2.2.1. The federal government should establish a government body (separate to a pay equity tribunal) to investigate, conduct consultations and establish committees with key stakeholders regarding pay equity and gender pay gap issues in segments of the workforce which may include specific industries and/or professions. The government body and committees should be resourced to conduct investigations and develop recommendations and strategies for a specified number of industries or professions over the course of a year, with support provided in a second year for implementation.

3.2.2.2. Half of the industries or professions to be focused on within a given year should be selected on the basis of an objective set of criteria using data from the pay equity audits. The other half of the industry or profession committees should be established based on application by stakeholders, with consideration given to the level of support from the industry/profession. Positive outcomes are most likely where there is constructive engagement of unions, employer organisations and major employers. Given, however, that there may not be a willingness of some parties to pursue this in the industries or professions of greatest need, the aforementioned selection based on objective criteria is also important.

3.2.2.3. The government body should investigate the industry or profession (which, where relevant, should occur on a comparative basis with another industry or profession with a different gender makeup). With the aid, but not necessarily the agreement of the committee, the government body should make recommendations to government on any matters it considers relevant. The scope of recommendations should not be limited and could include, for example, factors that may be influencing women's retention in the profession, barriers to women's career progression or issues relating to education and training. The government body should have the capacity to refer matters to the pay equity tribunal where relevant.

3.2.2.4. The industry/profession committees should be funded and supported through the government body. The committee should act as a consultative committee to the government body in its investigations and development of recommendations. In addition, where possible the stakeholders within the committee should identify agreed recommendations (including those requiring action by other parties) and strategies and an implementation plan that stakeholders themselves can action within their own organisations. Where consensus can be reached the outcomes are more likely to be implemented successfully. In many industries, however, agreement may not be possible, in which case the recommendations of the government body will be very important.

3.2.2.5. The newly established government body should have a role in informing all employers, employees, unions and the community about pay equity and the gender pay gap through education and campaigns.

3.3. Industrial relations system

The industrial relation system has a direct impact upon the gender pay gap. APESMA urges the Committee to make recommendations which provide for an industrial relations system that ensures an adequate safety net for all employees and enables fair negotiations of collective agreements where this is the preference of employees. This should include:

- An effective award safety net for professionals to apply, regardless of rate of remuneration. This should include;
 - Continuing to provide professional career structures;
 - Maintenance of relativities in wage rates in awards/AFPC pay scales;
 - Greater scope for consideration of pay equity, including the broader implication of decisions, when conducting the wages and allowance review or its subsequent equivalent.
- Greater capacity for collective bargaining, given it is more likely to produce better outcomes for pay equity than individual negotiations. This should be include;
 - Good faith bargaining overseen by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) with capacity to issue orders to facilitate such bargaining and conduct last resort arbitration;
 - Greater capacity for multi-employer agreements for all employees, not only the low paid. The same conditions should apply for multi employer agreements as for others including for industrial action and good faith bargaining as outlined above.
 - All unions that have members in the workplace should be able to participate in the single bargaining unit, and, where there is support for a majority of relevant employees, capacity for a separate bargaining unit for professionals and managers.
- A safety net of wages and conditions, the capacity for collective bargaining and relevant rights and entitlements of employees should apply to the whole workforce, including, but not limited to low paid workers. In the event that it be deemed that a condition, right or consideration is only given/applied to the low paid, this should be defined to include employees on or near the relevant wage rate in the award/AFPC pay scale.

3.4. Retirement Incomes

APESMA urges the Committee to recommend investigation into options to raise the retirement incomes of women including through the tax system, government co-contributions, incentives for increased savings or other potential strategies.

3.5. Work/life balance

Enabling employees (both men and women) to balance work and life can assist with the retention and participation of women in the workforce. In order to assist men and women to balance work and life APESMA urges the Committee to recommend the following:

3.5.1. Parental Leave

3.5.1.1. Twenty eight weeks paid primary care giver leave (including 2 weeks prenatal leave) and four weeks paid non-primary care giver leave to all new parents at full income maintenance or the federal minimum wage (whichever is the greater) attracting their normal superannuation entitlement (at a minimum of 9%). The scheme should be significantly funded by government with a contribution by employers (in the case that the parent is an employee).

3.5.1.2. Remove the qualifying period for all unpaid parental leave.

3.5.1.3. Funding for research and initiatives that will contribute to community wide development of skills maintenance, continuing professional development and employee-employer contact whilst on parental leave, including structured programs for re-entry into their original profession.

3.5.2. National Employment Standards

3.5.2.1. The right to request flexible working arrangements should not require that the employee have served a qualifying period.

3.5.2.2. The right to request flexible working arrangements should not be limited to those with children under school age and should apply to all with needs emanating from carer responsibilities (including those that care for elderly parents, children of school age, etc).

3.5.2.3. Parental leave contained in the National Employment Standards should enable the right to request concurrent unpaid parental leave up to eight weeks as per the award test case standard.

3.5.2.4. There is currently no certainty over how disputes over the National Employment Standards will be resolved, nor any prescribed remedies or penalties for the clauses in relation to the right to request flexible work practices. Certainty on these matters is required.

3.5.3. Awards

3.5.3.1. APESMA opposes changes which would restrict access to award coverage on the basis of income. Awards have provided an important safety net of employment conditions relating to work

and life balance for professional employees. The loss of award coverage of those earning over \$100,000 would remove access to existing workplace rights and entitlements of many employees.

3.5.3.2. The new industrial relations system must provide an opportunity for continued updating of awards and the National Employment Standards to reflect changing community needs and standards on a regular basis. This process should be transparent with proposals assessed on their merits without being open to politicisation.

3.6. Addressing discrimination

APESMA urges the committee to recognise the impact of discrimination on the gender pay gap and support changes to discrimination legislation that include a more proactive approach.

4. The Gender Pay Gap and Women's Participation in Technical Professions

4.1. Is there equal pay for work of equal value? The views of technical professionals

4.1.1. Many technical professionals believe they do not receive equal pay for work of equal value

More than one in four (26.8%) female technical professionals do not believe that they receive equal compensation for work of equal value as compared to their male professional colleagues, according to APESMA's 2007 Women in the Professions survey in 2007.³ This question has been asked in the last four APESMA Women in the Professions Surveys (conducted between 2000 and 2007) and the answer for all respondents, who are predominantly technical professionals, has been relatively consistent; ranging between 26 to 29 per cent.⁴

4.1.2. Senior women most likely to believe they don't get equal pay for work of equal value

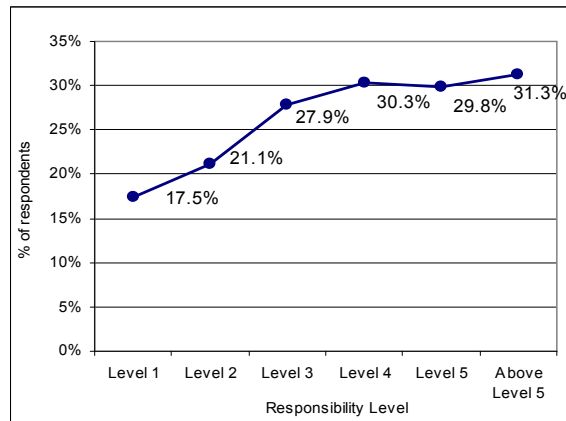
Significantly greater numbers of women at senior levels of the professions perceive that they do not receive equal compensation for work of equal value to their male colleagues than women at entry level (31.3% of those Above Level 5, compared to 17.5% at Level 1⁵).

³ APESMA 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report (available at http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp).

⁴ APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Reports for 2000,2002,2004 and 2007 are available at www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp

⁵ Within APESMA's remuneration and women's surveys Level 1 is the lowest responsibility level (Graduate) and Above Level 5 is the highest. The surveys require respondents to self nominate their job responsibility level with information provided on consistently used classification level definitions with information including typical job titles and duties available to the respondent.

Graph 1: Respondents that did not believe they received equal compensation for work of equal value compared to their male professional colleagues by level of responsibility



4.1.3. Higher results for business and those born overseas

Of those with qualifications in business, 38.8%⁶ perceived they did not get equal pay for work of equal value, much higher than the other professions (Engineering 23.8%, Science 25.5%, Computing 23.1% and Pharmacy 21.3%). In pharmacy, sample sizes are small and the results over multiple surveys have generally been much lower than the latest result (2000- 13%, 2002- 16%, 2004 – 8.3%) indicating that pharmacists are less likely than the other professions to perceive gender inequity.

4.1.4. Just under a third (30.8%) of respondents to the 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey born overseas believed that they did not receive equal compensation for equal work as compared with their male colleagues; this was higher than for the total respondents.

4.1.5. Greater transparency and accountability needed for pay outcomes

Given that more than one in four respondents did not believe that they received equal compensation for work of equal value to their male colleagues action on pay equity is needed across all workplaces. The aforementioned system of pay equity audits and plans should enable adjustments to achieve pay equity and greater transparency and accountability providing greater confidence of a fair outcome.

⁶ Though the sample sizes for business are small they have been consistently higher than other professions in the three surveys for which this result was analysed.

4.2. Is there equal pay for work of equal value? Recent data on technical professionals.

4.2.1. Lack of equal pay for equal work in technical professions

The 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report⁷ indicated that the median remuneration for women was lower than that of men undertaking work at the same responsibility level at almost all levels of engineering, science and information technology.

4.2.2. A gender pay gap for men and women undertaking full time work at the same responsibility level was evident at every level of science, ranging from 7.9% to 18.0%.⁸ For both engineering and IT, the gender pay gap was small or not existent at Level 1, emerged at Level 2 (4.1% for engineering and 4.9% for IT) and persisted through the levels to be highest at Level 5 (13.1% for engineering and 27.0% for IT). Where the largest number of women worked (at Level 3) the gender pay gap was 9.7% for engineering, 7.9% for science and 5.5% in IT (as is apparent in Table 1 and Graph 2).

4.2.3. Urgent action is needed within male dominated professions

While much of the focus and the remedies available in Australia in pay equity have focused on the differences that occur due to gender based occupational segregation and the undervaluing of the skills of female dominated occupations, the results contained in Table 1 and Graph 2 would indicate that pay inequity can exist within male dominated occupations. APESMA therefore urges the committee to recommend urgent action on this important issue including a multi-dimensional and proactive approach to achieving pay equity.

⁷ APESMA Women in the Professions Surveys (available at http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp) analyse remuneration data of full time respondents by gender which comes from APESMA remuneration surveys as detailed later in section 14, Information on APESMA Data Sources.

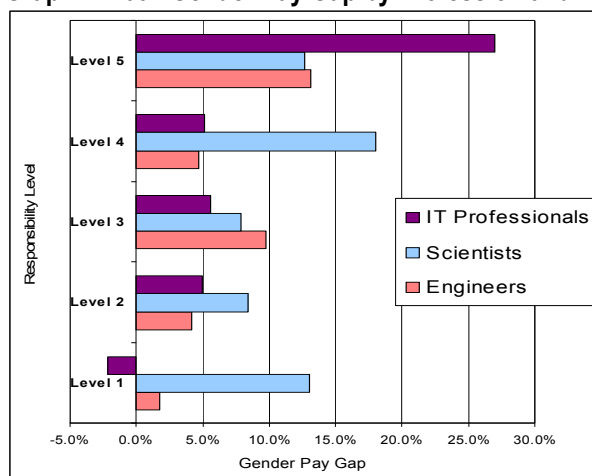
⁸ The gender pay gap here is calculated as the percentage difference in the median total package of men and women working full time reported in each of the APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Reports (available at www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp.)

Table 1: 2007 Gender Pay Gap by Profession and Responsibility Level⁹

	Gender	Level 1				Level 2				Level 3				Level 4				Level 5				Above Level 5			
		Sample size	Median Total Package	Median Years of Exp.	Gender Pay Gap	Sample size	Median Total Package	Median Years of Exp.	Gender Pay Gap	Sample size	Median Total Package	Median Years of Exp.	Gender Pay Gap	Sample size	Median Total Package	Median Years of Exp.	Gender Pay Gap	Sample size	Median Total Package	Median Years of Exp.	Gender Pay Gap	Sample size	Median Total Package	Median Years of Exp.	Gender Pay Gap
Engineers	Male	171	59924	1.5	1.8%	253	75690	4.0	4.1%	509	96300	13.0	9.7%	736	115592	22.0	4.7%	366	141756	25.0	13.1%	123	193720	30.0	Sample size too small
	Female	57	58860	1.0		55	72558	4.0		58	86945	8.0		30	110202	14.0		13	123125	15.0					
Scientists	Male	27	57932	1.0	13.1%	95	69671	5.0	8.4%	214	83600	11.0	7.9%	323	104500	19.0	18.0%	187	13200	25.0	12.7%	39	196200	30.0	Sample size too small
	Female	42	50366	1.0		117	63800	4.0		155	77000	8.0		92	85707	13.5		31	115221	21.0		3	107800	20.0	
IT	Male	62	52640	2.0	-2.1%	116	78121	10.0	4.9%	334	95440	15.0	5.5%	292	119886	20.0	5.2%	107	166451	24.0	27.0%	26	246540	25.0	Sample size too small
	Female	14	53758	1.5		24	74260	5.0		46	90158	13.0		40	113706	19.5		14	121505	22.0		5	223106	20.0	

Note: in most cases the median years of experience for women was lower than that of men. It is not known why this occurred. The data was analysed on responsibility level rather than years of experience as responsibility level is a better indicator of “work of equal value” than years of experience.

Graph 2: 2007 Gender Pay Gap by Profession and Responsibility Level¹⁰



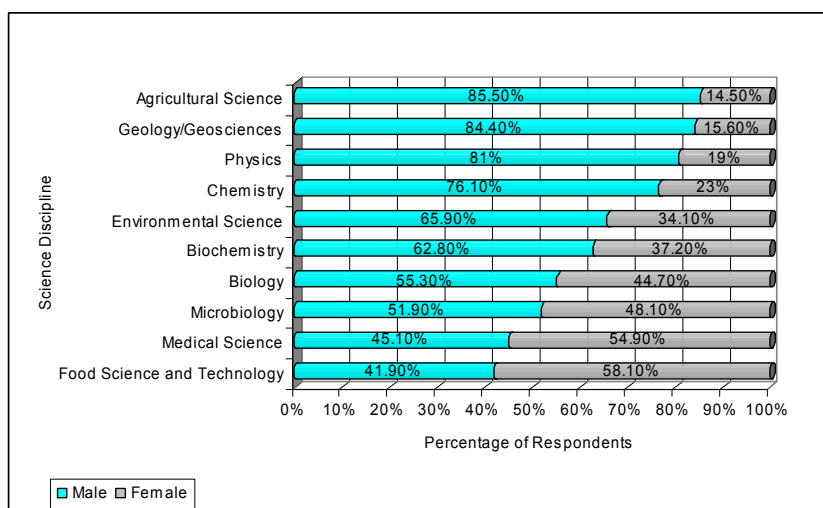
⁹ 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey (available at http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp) analyse remuneration data of full time respondents by gender which comes from APESMA remuneration surveys as detailed later in section 14, Information on APESMA Data Sources. The gender pay gap here is calculated as the percentage difference in the median total package of men and women working full time reported in each of the APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Reports (available at www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp.)

¹⁰ Ibid.

5. Women's Participation and the Gender Pay Gap in Science

5.1.1. Close to one third (33.5%) of the respondents to the 2007 APESMA/FASTS Professional Scientist Remuneration Survey were women. The proportion of scientists that were women varied significantly by discipline, being in a very distinct minority in agricultural science, geology/geosciences and physics. However, women made up majority of the respondents in food science and technology, and medical science (see Graph 3).

Graph 3: Gender of scientists by disciplines¹¹



5.1.2. Whilst women continue to make a vital contribution in science, evidence indicates that a gender pay gap persists for work at the same responsibility level and within and between scientific disciplines; as is explained in further detail here.

5.1.3. Many women scientists do not receive equal pay for equal work

Between 2000 and 2007 the gender pay gap for men and women undertaking work at the same responsibility level, whilst volatile, has been relatively consistent, generally between around 5-15%, as is apparent in Table 2.

¹¹ Data from the 2007 APESMA/FASTS Professional Scientist Remuneration Survey Report

Table 2: Gender Pay Gap of Median Total Package of Scientists by Responsibility Level 2000-2007¹²

Responsibility Level	2000	2002	2004	2007
Level 1	11.8%	6.5%	5.6%	13.1%
Level 2	8.0%	13.0%	10.5%	8.4%
Level 3	7.0%	2.0%	4.8%	7.9%
Level 4	5.2%	-9.4%	6.1%	18.0%
Level 5	**	**	**	12.7%
Above Level 5	**	**	**	**

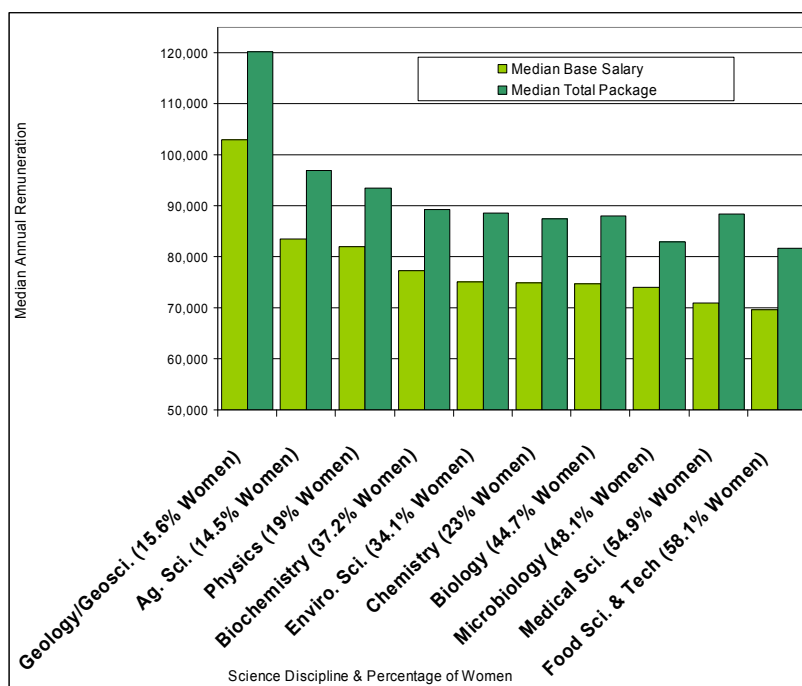
** Sample size too small (less than 12 women respondents).

There are differences in median salaries and gender profiles of the various disciplines of science and this may influence the results.

5.1.4. Science disciplines with more women have lower median base salary and total package

Median base salaries in the male dominated disciplines of science are higher than those for disciplines with a greater proportion of female employees. The trend is still apparent, but to a lesser extent, when examining the median total package by discipline.

Graph 4: 2007 Median Base Salary and Total Package by Science Discipline¹³



¹² The sample size in 2007 was larger and respondents were sourced differently (see Section 14 "Information on APESMA Data Sources). In some years the sample sizes have been quite small, particularly at senior levels where there are few women. It is unknown but this may be the cause of some of the volatility in the data. The gender pay gap here is calculated as the percentage difference in the median total package of men and women working full time reported in each of the APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Reports (available at www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp)

¹³ Data from the 2007 APESMA/FASTS Professional Scientist Remuneration Survey Report for full time respondents.

The causes for differences in the median base salaries and total packages in the different disciplines are likely to be quite complex and include factors such as current labour market trends (particularly in Geology/Geoscience which is in strong demand due to the booming resource and infrastructure sectors), the proportion of employees working at senior levels within each discipline and other factors. It is possible that work generally performed by women has been undervalued and further investigation is required to determine whether this is the case. The causes of the gender pay gap in science requires much further investigation, with a likelihood of a need for action in a number of industrial and policy areas, necessitating the work of industry/profession committees and a government body as outlined earlier.

5.1.5. Gender pay gap exists within science disciplines

With the exception of Biology, within each of the scientific disciplines of which there was sufficient data, the median base salary for women was lower than that of men (see Table 3). The gender pay gap is even larger when looking at the median total package. It is interesting to note the very different results for different disciplines and this requires further investigation.

Table 3: 2007 Median Base Salary and Median Total Package by Discipline and Gender¹⁴

Discipline of Science	Median Base Salary			Median Total Package		
	Male	Female	Gender Pay Gap	Male	Female	Gender Pay Gap
Biology	71730	76500	-6.6%	83246	90897	-9.2%
Medical Science	72000	67500	6.3%	92942	85469	8.0%
Environmental Science	76200	66300	13.0%	93045	75866	18.5%
Microbiology	80000	65000	18.8%	100211	73902	26.3%
Food Science and Technology	81820	60000	26.7%	100611	73871	26.6%
Chemistry	82600	64000	22.5%	100524	72157	28.2%
Geology/Geoscience	107500	78648	26.8%	130800	87045	33.5%

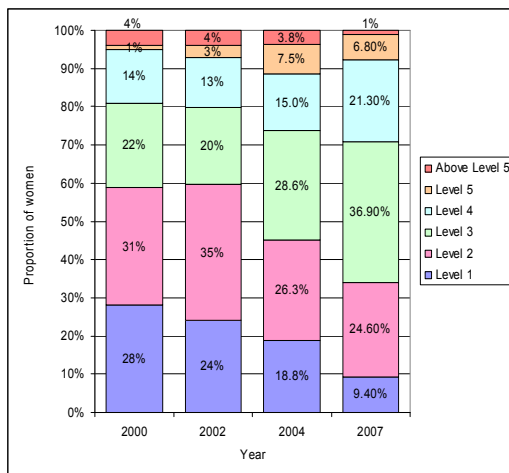
5.1.6. The causes of the gender pay gap apparent in Table 3 may include a greater proportion of men at senior levels, likely lower average years of experience of women respondents and other such factors, but should be further examined.

5.1.7. Women scientists concentrated at the lower levels with few in senior roles

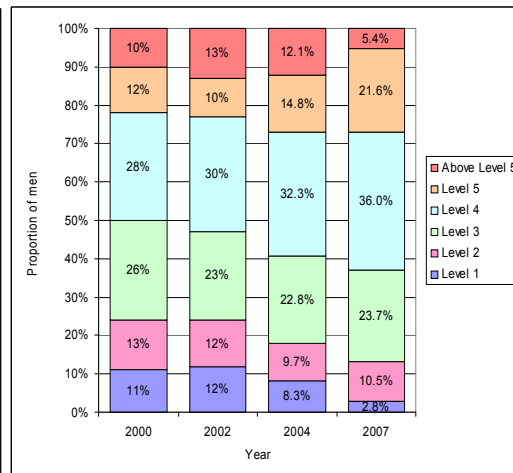
Women in science continue to be under represented at the more senior levels of the profession with much higher proportions working at lower responsibility levels than men. When examining the survey results across time it can be seen that a greater proportion of both men and women are at higher responsibility levels than in earlier years (see Graphs 5 and 6).

¹⁴ The gender pay gap here is calculated as the percentage difference in the median base salary and total package of men and women working full time. Some disciplines of science were not included here due to samples sizes of less than 12 women. The data comes from the APESMA 2007 APESMA/FASTS Professional Scientist Remuneration Survey Report.

Graph 5: Proportion of Female Scientists at Responsibility Levels 2000-2007



Graph 6: Proportion of Male Scientists at Responsibility Levels 2000-2007



5.1.8. The Women in Professions Survey Report 2000 found that 50% of men and 81% of women were undertaking work at responsibility levels 1-3. By 2007, 37% of men and 71% of women were working at these levels, therefore there was a slightly greater movement in the proportion of men working above Level 3 than for women.¹⁵ The proportion of women at Level 3 (rather than 1 or 2) increased at a greater rate than was the case for men between 2000 and 2007 (see Graphs 5 and 6).

5.1.9. The reason why women are concentrated at lower responsibility levels requires further investigation. Some of the factors that may contribute to this include educational attainment, years of experience and the pressures on women with family responsibilities (as discussed later). Though not analysed in the 2007 Women in the Professions Survey, the 2004 survey found that 31.4% of female and 52.7% of male scientists held post graduate qualifications.¹⁶ Age is likely to be an indicator of experience level and the average age for women in science was lower, at 35.3 (and 33.6 in 2000) than that of men, at 43.9 in 2007 (and 40.3 in 2000).¹⁷

5.1.10. The continuing significant difference in the proportion of women at senior levels in science, as compared to men, undoubtedly has an effect on the gender pay gap and requires urgent investigation and action. APESMA urges the committee to make recommendations which enable a government body and industry/profession committees to investigate and recommend actions on

¹⁵ Note: The sample size in 2007 was larger and respondents were sourced differently though the data still shows a consistent trend (see Section 14 "Information on APESMA Data Sources"). APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Reports for 2000,2002,2004 and 2007 are available at www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp

¹⁶ APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report 2004 (available at: www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp).

¹⁷ APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Reports for 2000,2002,2004 and 2007 are available at www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp

the gender pay gap including addressing broader issues such those related to the career progression of women.

6. Women’s Participation and the Gender Pay Gap in Engineering

6.1.1. Women in engineering: maintaining and increasing diversity requires action

In 1983, 0.5% of professional engineers were women.¹⁸ By 2006 there had been a substantial change. The Australian Bureau of Statistic Census indicated that women made up 9.6% of what it termed “engineering professions” and 8.1% of “engineering occupations” in 2006.¹⁹ So whilst engineering continues to be a male dominated profession, it is significantly less so than when today’s most experienced engineers would have begun their careers.

6.1.2. Women made up 16.8% of engineering graduates (from the previous two years) in 1994 and this consistently increased and peaked at 28.3% in 2003²⁰ before a slight decline and then plateau. In 2008 24.8% of engineering graduates from the previous two years were women.²¹ This stabilisation in the proportion of women graduates of engineering is of great concern to the Association which values diversity within the profession.

6.1.3. A gender pay gap for work at the same responsibility level persists in engineering

A gender pay gap has persisted since 2000 for women undertaking work at the same responsibility level as men, as is apparent in Table 4.²² Though the data is less consistent and the gap generally smaller than is the case for scientists, trends emerge with a very low gender pay gap at Level 1 and reasonably consistent gaps at Levels 2 and 3, where a greater proportion of women work.

Table 4: Gender Pay Gap of Median Total Package of Engineers by Responsibility Level 2000-2007

Responsibility Level	2000	2002	2004	2007
Level 1	0.03%	2.97%	0.02%	1.8%
Level 2	12.73%	2.30%	6.74%	4.1%
Level 3	-2.23%	4.19%	5.43%	9.7%
Level 4	**	-5.46%	-0.45%	4.7%
Level 5	**	6.36%	6.24%	13.1%
Above Level 5	**	**	**	**

** Sample size too small (less than 12 women respondents).

¹⁸ Beder, S., (2004) *The New Engineer: Management and Professional Responsibility in a Changing World*, Macmillan Publishers, Australia p11.

¹⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics cited in Engineers Australia (2008) *The Engineering Profession: A Statistical Overview, Fifth Edition, 2008*

²⁰ APESMA 2008 Graduate Engineer Employment Survey Report available at: www.apesma.asn.au/surveys

²¹ Ibid.

²² The Gender Pay Gap here represents the percentage difference in the median total package of men and women working full time reported in each of the APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Reports (available at www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp.)

6.1.4. Gender pay gap of 27.6% for Engineers

When examining the gender pay gap for the whole profession (regardless of responsibility level) the gap is much greater (as apparent in Table 5). This much higher gender pay gap is likely to reflect the lower proportion of women in senior levels of the profession and the lower years of experience (average years of experience of these respondents was 19.1 for men and 7.3 for women).

Table 5: 2008 Median Base Salary and Median Total Package by Gender²³

Median Base Salary			Median Total Package		
Male	Female	Gender Pay Gap	Male	Female	Gender Pay Gap
97000	72250	25.5%	117803	85330	27.6%

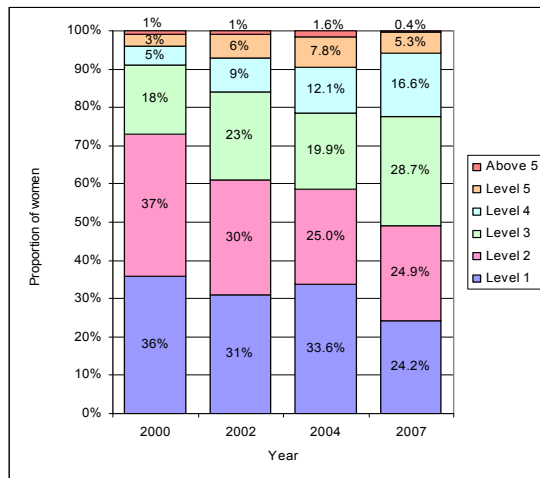
6.1.5. Few women in senior roles of engineering/loss of women in engineering

Data from the Women in the Professions Survey Reports from 2000 to 2007²⁴ indicate that women are concentrated at the lower levels of responsibility in the engineering profession, though with some progression through the levels. As is apparent in Graphs 7 and 8 in 2000 54% of men were working at responsibility levels 1-3 as compared to 91% of women. In the years that follow there appears to have been a trend to lower proportions of both men and women working at lower responsibility levels with 42.6% (11.4% less than in 2000) of men at Levels 1-3 and 77.8% (13.2% less than in 2000) of women at levels 1-3 reported in the Women in Professions Survey Report 2007. When examining each of the levels specifically, it is apparent that a much greater proportion of women have progressed to Level 3 and 4 where this trend has not occurred to the same extent for men. The number of women at the most senior levels (Level 5 and Above Level 5) continues to be very small (which also leads to smaller sample sizes and greater fluctuation in the data).

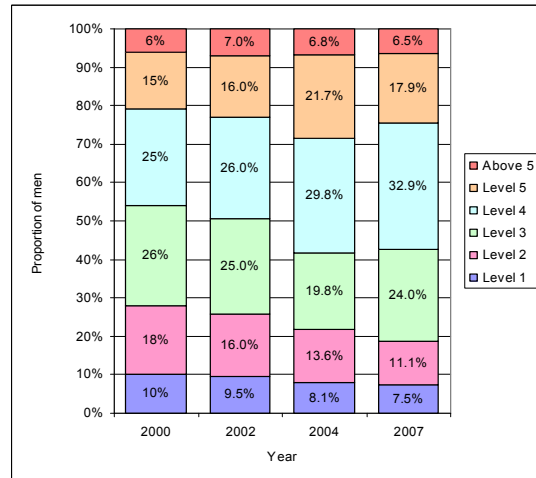
²³ Gender Pay Gap here represents the percentage difference in the median base salary and total package of men and women working full time reported in *APESMA Professional Engineer Remuneration Report June 2008*.

²⁴ APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Reports for 2000,2002,2004 and 2007 are available at www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp

Graph 7: Proportion of Female Engineers at Responsibility Levels 2000-2007



Graph 8: Proportion of Male Engineers at Responsibility Levels 2000-2007



6.1.6. Women, as compared to men, continue to be concentrated at the lower levels of the engineering profession; however a greater proportion of women are working at higher responsibility levels than previously. This largely reflects a trend for both men and women, though the trend has been more pronounced for women indicating some, though limited, progression of women in engineering since 2000.

6.1.7. One of the causes for the different levels of responsibility of the genders is likely to be the differing levels of experience of men and women, with women entering the profession more recently. Though age does not necessarily reflect experience it is likely to be an indicator. The average age of female respondents reported in the 2007 data was 31.2 (29.1 in 2000), as compared with 43.5 for males (40.4 in 2000). Retaining women in the profession, therefore, is an essential element of ensuring that there are more women in senior roles in the future.

6.1.8. Though there are more women in the profession than 25 years ago and some progression of women through responsibility levels is apparent, it is important not to assume that women will continue to make up a greater proportion of the profession and continue to progress without policy approaches that enable that. Women are leaving the profession faster than men. As was noted in the APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report 2007²⁵, 11% of engineers with 7-10 years experience in 2006 were women, as compared with 18% of graduates in 1996. It is therefore estimated that women are leaving the profession at a rate that is 38.8% faster than men. The lack of the retention of women is occurring at a time when Australia is experiencing skills shortages in

²⁵ 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report (available at http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp).

many technical professions including disciplines of engineering.²⁶ There is therefore an economic imperative to ensure that skilled and experienced women are retained in the profession. Potential causes of the retention difficulties are discussed further later.

6.1.9. Addressing gender pay gap must include retention in profession and career progression

The continuing gender pay gap in the engineering profession is evidence of the need for an approach that extends beyond issues caused by gender based occupational segregation, including action and reporting at the workplace level and the capacity to investigate industries and professions. In the case of engineering there is a need to further understand and act on women's retention and career progression as part of addressing the gender pay gap.

7. Women's Participation and the Gender Pay Gap in Information Technology

7.1.1. Women a minority in information technology

Information technology is a male dominated profession with women making up 14.3% of respondents to the 2007 remuneration survey of IT professionals.²⁷ This varied according to sector with women making up 27.4% of respondents working in education and 17.9% of those in the public sector as compared to 11.7% of those in the private sector, though a majority of both men and women in IT work in the private sector.

7.1.2. Gender pay gap persists in IT

The data contained in the APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Reports over a number of years have reasonably consistently indicated that the median total package of women is lower than that of men for work at the same responsibility level, as is apparent in Table 6.

Table 6: Gender Pay Gap of Median Total Package of Information Technology Professionals by Responsibility Level 2000-2007²⁸

Responsibility Level	2000	2002	2004	2007
Level 1	5.01%	**	5.9%	-2.1%
Level 2	7.14%	4.99%	2.3%	4.9%
Level 3	1.50%	5.09%	5.3%	5.5%
Level 4	0.69%	3.97%	9.1%	5.2%
Level 5	0.36%	5.18%	-2.9%	27.0%
Above Level 5	9.34%	5.15%	9.5%	**

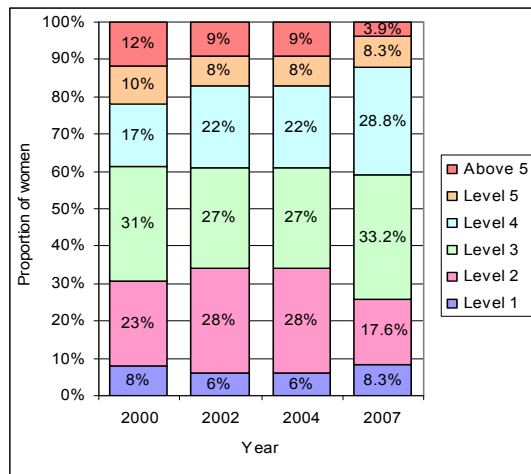
** Sample size too small (less than 12 women respondents).

²⁶ Engineers Australia (2008) *The Engineering Profession: A Statistical Overview, Fifth Edition, 2008*

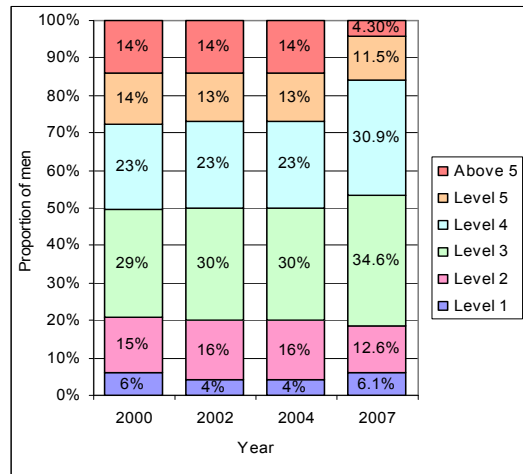
²⁷ APESMA 2007 *Australian Computer Society Remuneration Survey Report*

²⁸ The Gender Pay Gap here represents the difference in the percentage difference in the median total package of men and women working full time reported in each of the APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Reports (available at www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp.)

Graph 9: Proportion of Female IT Professionals at Responsibility Levels 2000-2007



Graph 10: Proportion of Male IT Professionals at Responsibility Levels 2000-2007



7.1.3. Experienced women but still less working at senior levels in IT

In information technology the proportion of men and women respondents at different responsibility levels was more closely aligned than was the case with engineering and science. However, unlike engineering and science the average age of women respondents was actually very similar to that of men (women: 42.8 and men 42.9).²⁹ Therefore it is disappointing that there still continues to be a difference with 59% of women and 53.3% of men undertaking work at Level 1, 2 and 3 and 12.2% of women and 15.8% of men undertaking work at Level 5 or above.³⁰

7.1.4. Women in IT need action

Investigation into the continuing gender pay gap and lower proportions of women in senior positions within information technology is urgently needed, with subsequent action to redress this required. As is the case with engineering, the gender pay gap amongst information technology professionals is evidence of the issue within male dominated professions. Greater accountability, transparency and action at the workplace and potential to investigate the profession more broadly is needed to begin to combat this continuing problem.

²⁹ *Women in the Professions Survey Report* (available at http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp).

³⁰ APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Reports for 2000,2002,2004 and 2007 are available at www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp

8. The Gender Pay Gap and the Participation of Women in Community Pharmacy

8.1.1. Greater centralised wage fixation = lower gender pay gap

Unlike many of the other professions that are part of the APESMA membership, a majority of community pharmacists are women (62.6% of respondents to the 2008 pharmacist's remuneration survey³¹). In the past pharmacy has also been distinct from APESMA's other areas of coverage in that pharmacists were previously more dependent on award rates of pay and not only at the graduate/entry level. The gender pay gap within community pharmacy has been negligible compared to other APESMA membership areas. However, the Association is concerned that as pharmacists become more reliant on the individual negotiations for pay increases due to the erosion of an effective award safety net, it may become more significant.

8.1.2. Decline in real wages in "safety net"

The hourly award rate for a community pharmacist with a four year degree and more than four years experience increased from \$18.72 in 1998 to \$22.36 in 2007.³² This is an increase of 19.4% over nine years, or an average of 2.2% per year and in 2007 was only 0.6%. Flat dollar increases, in some years with lower increases for higher salaries, as part of the safety net/ wages and allowances review decisions over a number of years have drastically eroded relativities, undermining an effective safety net for community pharmacists and other professional employees.

8.1.3. In real terms the award/AFPC Pay Scale rates for community pharmacists have decreased in real terms nearly every year over the last nine years with the Consumer Price Index higher than the award increase every year (except for 1999 when CPI was only 1.1%).³³ APESMA has therefore encouraged members to individually negotiate salary increases in order to ensure that they do not have a decline in real wages. The erosion of the award safety net for community pharmacists coincided with a time when there were skills shortages within the national and international pharmacy workforce.³⁴ However, since 2000 there have been eight new schools of pharmacy and eleven new courses, significantly increasing the number of current and anticipated future graduates.³⁵ There has also been strong growth in supply of pharmacists from immigration.³⁶

³¹ APESMA Pharmacists Division *Community and Hospital Pharmacists' Remuneration Survey Report 2008*

³² Rates for an Experienced Pharmacist (4 years +) from Transitional Award.

³³ Consumer Price Index taken at June each year as compared to the percentage increase in the rate for an Experienced Pharmacist (4+ years) resulting from relevant award/AFPC pay scale adjustments for each year.

³⁴ Health Care Intelligence Pty Ltd (2003) *A Study of the Demand and Supply of Pharmacists 200-2010* available at <http://www.uq.edu.au/pharmacy/PACE/EOI%20Document%20Annexure%20E%20-%20Exec%20Sum%20-%20Supply%20&%20Demand%20Study.pdf>.

³⁵ Ridoutt, L., Bagnulo, J. and Bason, J., of Human Capital Alliance (2008) *Analysis of secondary data to understand pharmacy workforce supply: Pharmacy Workforce Planning Study Initial Supply Report*.

³⁶ Ibid.

APESMA is greatly concerned about the affect of a potential future oversupply of pharmacists on wage increases and the gender pay gap given that there has been an erosion of an effective award safety net and extremely low levels of collective agreements.

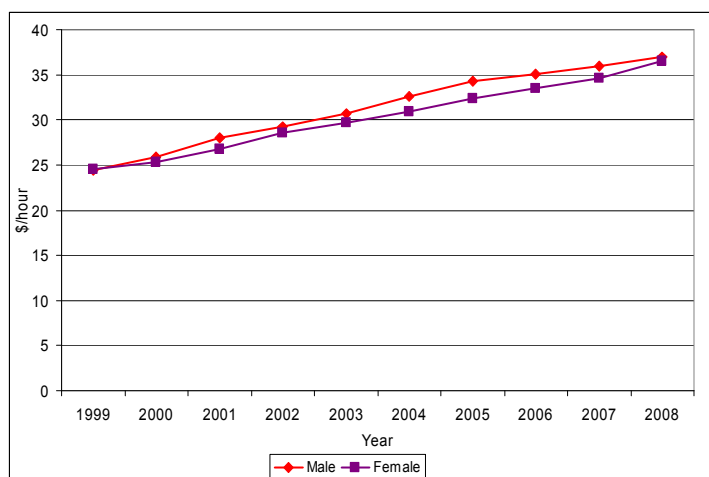
8.1.4. Gender Pay Gap in Community Pharmacy

The other trend that is apparent as the erosion of the award safety net has occurred is a growth in the gender pay gap, which, whilst relatively small compared to other industries, was growing until more recently, as evidenced in the table and graph below. Whilst the recent figures are encouraging, APESMA fears that the volatility of the market and the nature of individual negotiations may lead this to be an ongoing problem.

Table 7: Average Base Hourly Rate of Pay of Community Pharmacists by Gender³⁷

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Male	24.46	25.89	27.98	29.24	30.72	32.55	34.24	35.07	35.97	36.99
Female	24.53	25.28	26.83	28.58	29.68	30.89	32.33	33.55	34.67	36.56
Gender Pay Gap	-0.07	0.61	1.15	0.66	1.04	1.66	1.91	1.52	1.3	0.43

Graph 11: Average Base Hourly Rate of Pay of Community Pharmacists by Gender³⁸



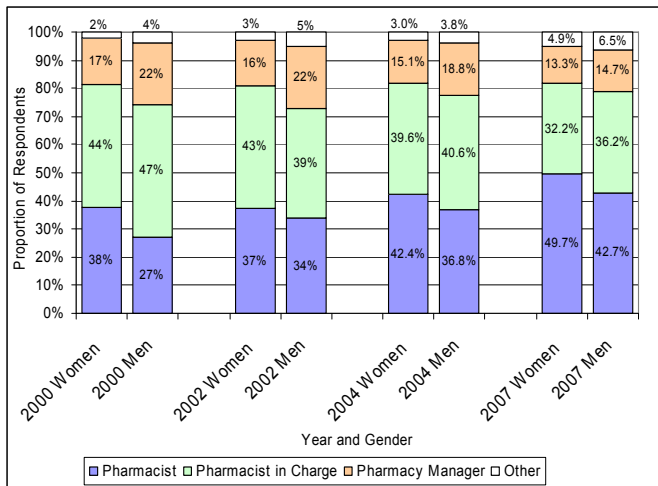
8.1.5. Responsibility Levels of Men and Women

Potentially affecting the gender pay gap are lower proportions of women than men at more senior levels of the profession (as is apparent in Graph 12), though this is less distinct than for any of the other professions as discussed earlier.

³⁷ This data includes pharmacists of all responsibility levels and is from the APESMA Pharmacists Division *Community and Hospital Pharmacists' Remuneration Survey Report 2008*

³⁸ Ibid

Graph 12: Proportion Pharmacists at Responsibility Levels by Gender, 2000-2007



8.1.6. Fair Industrial Relations System Needed

In order to ensure that a gender pay gap does not become a feature of the industry and that this female dominated profession is fairly remunerated regardless of levels of supply and demand, it is essential that award relativities in this, and other awards for professionals, are retained through percentage rather than flat dollar increases.

8.1.7. In an industry characterised by small employers there are currently very few collective agreements. APESMA, the relevant union in this industry, is only a party to one. Greater capacity to negotiate multi-employer agreements may better enable employees to negotiate collective agreements which (as discussed below) on average, deliver lower gender pay gaps than individual negotiations. Greater capacity for multi-employer agreements, therefore, should not be limited to low paid employees. The same rights of the parties, including good faith bargaining and potential for industrial action, should apply regardless of whether it is in pursuit of a single or multi employer agreement. These measures are important to ensure that a gender pay gap does not become a feature of the profession.

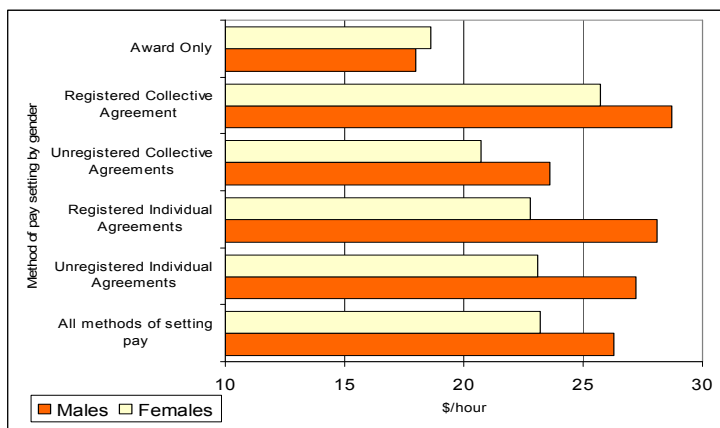
9. Industrial Instruments and the Gender Pay Gap

9.1. The industrial relations system, and the way it operates, has an effect on the gender pay gap.

Australian Bureau of Statistics data for non-managerial employees for 2006 demonstrate that the gender pay gap is lowest for those paid award rates (though the rates themselves are low) and the greatest gender pay gap existed amongst those covered by registered individual agreements followed by unregistered individual agreements.³⁹

³⁹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 6306.0. Data cited in Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (2007) *Pay Equity: Time to Act* Report of the inquiry on the impact of Work Choices on pay equity in Queensland, 28th September 2007, p58. (available at www.qirc.qld.gov.au/inquiry/pay_equity/final/final_report.htm).

Graph 13: Average hourly cash earnings for non-managerial employees, May 2006, by method of pay setting and gender



9.2. Technical professionals not confident in negotiating individually

Despite current skills shortages, of respondents to the 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey (all women) only 3.2% of information technology professionals, 3.3% of engineers and 5.1% of scientists responded that they would be very confident to negotiate their pay and conditions; a further 16.1% of information technology professionals, 27.4% of engineers and 20.1% of scientists responded that they were confident to negotiate their pay and conditions of employment.⁴⁰

9.3. Need for Fair Collective Bargaining to Achieve Pay Equity

It is essential that the industrial relations system effectively enables collective bargaining as it provides better pay equity outcomes. This should include good faith bargaining with oversight by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, the capacity for orders to facilitate good faith bargaining and last resort arbitration. To ensure that the interests of professional employees are represented, fair collective bargaining should enable all unions who have members in the workplace to participate in the single bargaining unit and, where there is support from a majority of the relevant employees, the capacity for a separate bargaining unit for professional and managerial employees in recognition of their different needs.

9.4. An effective award safety net for professionals: an important part of pay equity

Where individual negotiations are conducted, it is vital that they are done so backed by an effective safety net for all employees, including professionals of all remuneration levels (as discussed later in regards to work/life balance).

⁴⁰ 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report (available at http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp).

- 9.4.1. Currently the wage-setting parameters of the AFPC require S23 (c) “providing a safety net for the low paid.” The safety net for professional employees has therefore been eroded over the last ten years with flat dollar increases, sometimes lower at higher levels of pay. It is important that the AFPC and any subsequent relevant body conduct Wages and Allowances Reviews or their equivalent, with an open and transparent process in which they are required to maintain an effective safety net for all employees, including maintaining work value relativities.
- 9.4.2. APESMA awards also provide classification structures which promote professional career paths, enabling career progression and increasing a sense of professional identity. Unclear career objectives were noted by 45.8% of respondents to the 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey as having a moderate or significant affect on their career progression.⁴¹ It is therefore vital that award coverage continues to apply (regardless of remuneration), careers paths contained within awards are retained and maintained and that wages are updated to reflect work value relativities.
- 9.4.3. In its recent decision, AFPC stated that “[i]t is beyond the remit of the Commission to consider equal remuneration beyond the level of the minimum wages.” This very narrow view does not enable the AFPC to effectively respond to the real impact of its decisions on the gender pay gap. It is therefore important that any government body responsible for future award/AFPC pay scale adjustments considers the broader consequences of its decisions on pay equity.

10. Women’s Retirement Incomes

- 10.1. The effect of the gender pay gap is apparent not only in women’s working years but also in their retirement incomes, where lower earnings, breaks from the workforce and in some cases past discriminatory superannuation practices impact. Figures have shown that 70 per cent of all women aged between 45-60 years have \$25,000 or less in superannuation.⁴²
- 10.2. This provides a further imperative to close the gender pay gap but also necessitates an immediate response for those already likely to be disadvantaged. APESMA therefore urges the Committee to recommend an investigation into options to raise the retirement incomes of women including through the tax system, government co-contributions, incentives for increased savings or other potential strategies.

⁴¹ 2007 APESMA *Women in the Professions Survey Report* (available at http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp).

⁴² Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2007) *It’s About Time: Women, Men, Work and Family* P41 (available at: http://www.hreoc.gov.au/sex_discrimination/its_about_time/docs/its_about_time_2007.pdf).

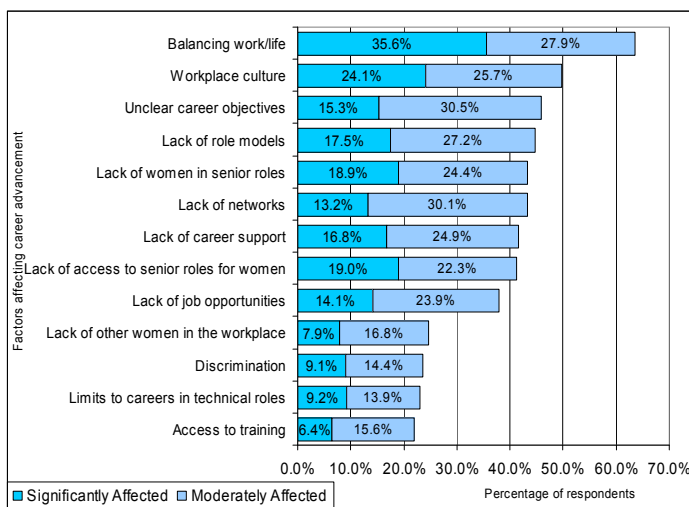
11. Barriers to women’s participation in the workforce, retention in the professions and career progression

11.1. As was evidenced when examining the data on the gender pay gap and the lower proportion of women at senior levels in the professions, women’s retention in the profession and career progression must be recognised as an essential part of addressing the gender pay gap.

11.2. Barriers to career progression

11.2.1. Respondents to the 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey were asked about the factors affecting their career advancement. Balancing work and life was the most frequently identified factor with a majority of respondents (65.3%) responding that it had affected their career either significantly or moderately (see Graph 15). The next most frequently identified factor was workplace culture with close to half (49.8%) of respondents stating that this had had an effect on their career advancement.

Graph 14: Have the following factors affected your career advancement?



11.2.2. Some of the factors above may be attributed to, or influenced by women working in a male dominated profession, for example lack of other women in the workplace and lack of women in senior roles. These potentially self-perpetuating factors provide a further incentive to ensure that women are retained in the professions.

11.3. Work/life balance

11.3.1.1. Employment intentions of women engineers

As stated earlier, women are leaving the engineering profession faster than men in a time of skills shortage which is of great concern. Engineers Australia recently conducted a survey of women

and men regarding women’s progress in the engineering workforce⁴³ which included questions on their employment intentions. Of women respondents 25.4% stated they were likely or very likely and a further 19.7% were undecided about whether they would leave their job within the next twelve months. This result was not significantly different to that for male respondents, however their reasons and their likelihood of returning to the profession were. Of those that responded that they were likely or very likely to leave their current position in the next twelve months only 58.2% of women respondents (compared to 74.3% of men) answered that they would search for an engineering position in the future, with a further 34.2% of women and 21.7% of men responding “maybe”. When asked their main reason for intending to leave their current position respondents were provided with limited options and 42.3% of women chose “other” (see Table 9).

Table 8: Main reason for intending to leave by gender

Main reason for intending to leave	Women	Men
Other	42.3%	22.8%
Gain experience	22.7%	31.0%
More pay	9.7%	17.1%
Insufficient opportunities	9.7%	11.4%
Management style	7.9%	5.1%
Limited chance of promotion	6.0%	9.5%
More variety	1.8%	3.2%

This table is directly reproduced from the Engineers Australia report.⁴⁴

Of women that responded “other” aged 20-29 the report states that the most prevalent reasons were further study and travel and for those aged 30-39 the most prevalent reasons were maternity leave and family responsibilities. The report provides the following quote from one of the women engineers that completed the survey:

“The hours that I need to work in order to undertake and complete the projects that I have are in excess of that which I want. The long hours and unreasonable demands of clients have resulted in a work situation with which I am extremely dissatisfied. I work part-time as I have two young children (<5years). However, I am forced to constantly sacrifice time

⁴³ Engineers Australia (2008) *Valuing the Difference: An update on the progress of women in the engineering profession* (available at: http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uid=7DA323DA-E3CC-A6FB-8DB3-4D97EFFBBEEF&siteName=ieaust)

⁴⁴ Engineers Australia (2008) *Valuing the Difference: An update on the progress of women in the engineering profession* , p19 (available at: http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uid=7DA323DA-E3CC-A6FB-8DB3-4D97EFFBBEEF&siteName=ieaust)

with them for work commitments. I will either be resigning or taking extended leave without pay (12 months or longer) for this reason.”⁴⁵

11.3.1.2. The survey also asked respondents whether, if given the choice again, they would choose to study engineering; 19.0% of women and 16.4% of men responded that they would not. When asked why, both men and women who had responded they would not provided comments regarding a perceived lack of reward and recognition and some on the profession not being technically challenging enough. The report states that though not common in male respondents, issues relating to work and family balance were very common amongst the female respondents and quotes from one 30-39 year old female engineer (regarding if presented with the choice of studying engineering again);

“I might but then I would not have children. Having children it has been impossible to establish a career in engineering. I wish I had studied for a career that fits better with family responsibilities.”⁴⁶

11.3.1.3. The industrial relations system, industry and employers must ensure that it is possible to have a career in engineering with family responsibilities to retain skilled and experienced women, increase diversity within the profession and provide greater capacity for all engineers (including men) to balance work and family.

11.3.2. Men and women’s work/life balance

Ensuring the opportunity for work and life balance not only for women, but also for men, provides greater choice to families and households regarding the share of caring and domestic responsibilities undertaken, potentially leading to greater participation of women in the workforce.

11.3.3. Importance of balancing work and life to technical professionals

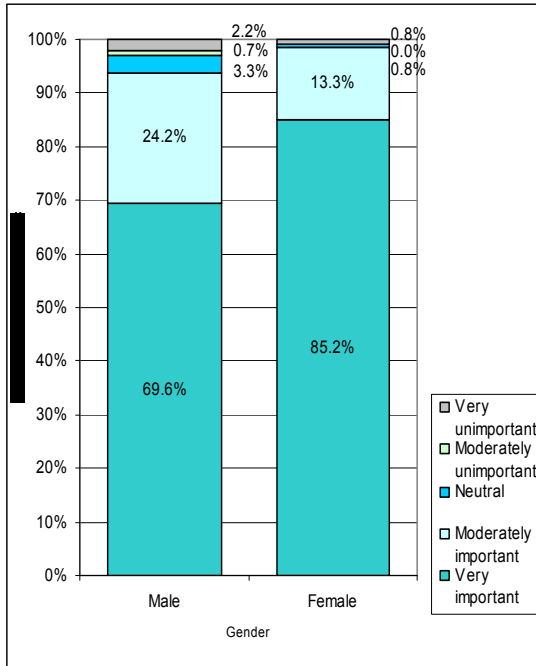
In 2007, APESMA conducted a survey where members were asked to rate characteristics of an employer of choice and then to rate their current employer on those characteristics. “An employer who genuinely encourages me to maintain work/life balance” was the factor rated as “Very significant” most frequently by female respondents (85.2%) and the second most highly rated factor for male respondents (69.9%) (behind only “An employer who provides a safe work environment”).

⁴⁵ Engineers Australia (2008) *Valuing the Difference: An update on the progress of women in the engineering profession*, p20 (available at: http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uid=7DA323DA-E3CC-A6FB-8DB3-4D97EFFBBEEF&siteName=ieaust)

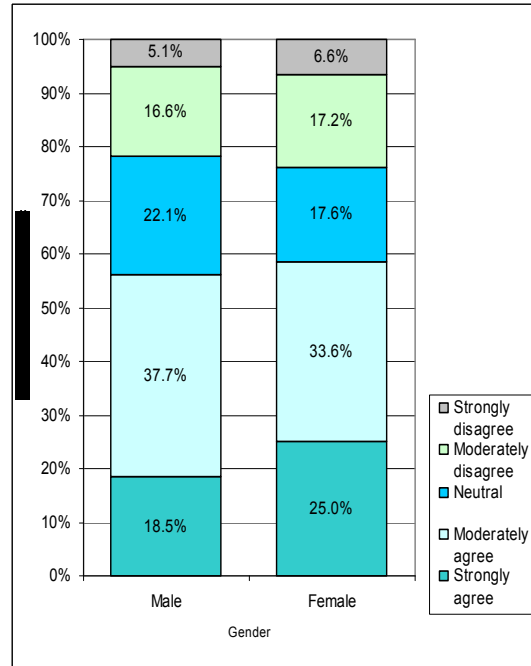
⁴⁶ Engineers Australia (2008) *Valuing the Difference: An update on the progress of women in the engineering profession*, p23 (available at: http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uid=7DA323DA-E3CC-A6FB-8DB3-4D97EFFBBEEF&siteName=ieaust)

For both men and women, it was rated as very significant by a much larger proportion of respondents than remuneration.

Graph 16: Importance of characteristics of Employer of Choice: An employer who genuinely encourages me to maintain a work/life balance



Graph 17: Rating of Current Employer on characteristic: My employer genuinely encourages me to maintain work/life balance



As is apparent in the above graphs, though 98.5% of female and 93.2% of male respondents rated employer support for maintaining work/life balance as either very or moderately important, a much lower proportion strongly or moderately agreed that their current employer genuinely encourages them to maintain work/life balance (58.6% of women and 56.2% of men). It is extremely disappointing that given it was rated as such a high priority to technical professionals that 23.8% of women and 21.7% of men moderately or strongly disagreed with the statement that their current employer encouraged this.

11.3.4. Parental leave

Paid and unpaid parental leave are important to ensure parents are able to balance work and family and remain in the workforce. APESMA urges the Committee to recommend 28 weeks paid primary care giver leave (including two weeks prenatal leave) and four weeks paid non-primary care giver leave. APESMA also urges the Committee to recommend that the qualifying period for unpaid parental leave be removed and that the National Employment Standards provide a right to request up to eight weeks unpaid concurrent parental leave as per the award test case standard.

A study in the UK found that not only the availability, but the duration and generosity of paid maternity leave affected the likelihood of mothers returning to their employer after the birth of a child.⁴⁷ Australia still does not have a statutory entitlement to paid parental leave and many technical professionals do not have access to any, or only have a short duration.

Of respondents to the 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey, 46.3% did not have access to any paid maternity leave. Of those that had children, 34% did not take any maternity leave (paid or unpaid). Of those that took maternity leave, 36% had no paid leave, 10% had six weeks or less, 39% received 7-13 weeks, 5% had 14 weeks and 10% had more than 14 weeks (though some may have reported time at half pay).⁴⁸

In APESMA's recent submission to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave⁴⁹ one member stated:

"When I left uni, I assumed that by the time I was ready to have kids, all this would have been sorted out. It's sad, and frightening, that it hasn't. I am running out of time to have children, I want children, but at the same time, I am reluctant to be part of the next generation that is condemned to less superannuation, fewer career choices, and job insecurity because of that choice. It's such an awful choice to have to make. Knowing that there was paid maternity leave available would make it so much easier."

- Environmental Engineer, New South Wales

Of respondents to the 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey⁵⁰ with children, 56.9% believed that taking maternity leave would be detrimental to their career and members have informed the Association of lack of support from their employer for professional development whilst on maternity leave and an absence of consultation on changes occurring in the workplace. Further investigation is required regarding the needs of technical professionals (including skills maintenance) whilst on longer periods of parental leave to ensure greater re-entry into the workforce. The Association urges the Committee to recommend funding for research and initiatives that will contribute to community wide development of skills maintenance, continuing professional development and employee-employer contact whilst on parental leave, including structured programs for re-entry into their original profession.

⁴⁷ Cited in Thornthwaite, L. (2002) Work-family balance: international research on employee preferences *Working Paper 79* From the Working Time Today Conference 16 August 2002, ACIRRT, University of Sydney (available at www.wrc.org.au/documents/WP79.pdf).

⁴⁸ 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report (available at http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp).

⁴⁹ APESMA Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into paid maternity, paternity and parental leave, p13, available at: www.pc.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0016/81430/sub204.pdf

⁵⁰ 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report (available at http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp).

Recent research in Australia has found that 14 percent of employed women in a study left the workforce around the birth of their child. Of this group, 20% responded that their job was too demanding or they were unable to get flexibility in hours, 17% responded that it was due to lack of paid maternity leave and 10% responded that it was due to a lack of a supportive work environment.⁵¹ This provides considerable scope for better retention of women in the workplace upon return from parental leave by introducing better work/life balance for employees including a workplace culture changes.

11.3.5. Part-time work

Of respondents to a recent Engineers Australia survey, 67.7% of female and 55.5% of male respondents perceived that part time work was available to them in their current or former place of work.⁵² Though reported as a significant increase than a previous survey in 1999, a third of women and close to half of men perceive that they do not have access part time work if they need to. It is also important to examine usage rates which were much lower at 21.2% for women and 10.1% for men (this includes whether they had ever worked part time for that current or former employer). APESMA surveys have indicated that there are very low levels of part time work in technical professions (with the exception of community pharmacy). In the APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report 2007, 12.1% of engineers, 16.5% of scientists and 17.0% of information technology professionals reported currently working part time, significantly lower than 45.5% of pharmacists.⁵³ The rates of men currently working part time in engineering, science and information technology are extremely low.

Even where part-time work is reported as available, in some cases utilising this option may be more difficult due to the workplace culture and potential impact on the person's career. When seeking feedback for APESMA's recent submission to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave, a member told the Association:

"It has taken me 5 years, but I have finally let go of what "could have been" and I have adjusted my own perception and expectations for my "career" now and have come to terms with the fact that I need to work very hard just to keep my career and status in a holding-pattern. I have no direct prospects of progression, promotion or even consideration of a new job with a new

⁵¹ Whitehouse, G., Baird, M., Diamond, C., and Hosking, A. (2006) *The Parental Leave in Australia Survey: November 2006 Report* (available at www.uq.edu.au/polsis/parental-leave/level1-report.pdf).

⁵² Engineers Australia (2008) *Valuing the Difference: An update on the progress of women in the engineering profession*, p18 (available at: http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uid=7DA323DA-E3CC-A6FB-8DB3-4D97EFFBBEEF&siteName=ieaust)

⁵³ 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report (available at http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp).

employer. My first responsibility is balancing the impact that the demands of my job has on my children...

I work very hard, including working from home at night, weekends etc when needed to maintain my full-time workload within my part-time hours (21 hours per week) so that I don't jeopardise my "privileged" status of working part-time...I feel that I must over-achieve in order to compensate for not being in the office in a full-time capacity and I genuinely feel that I also need to work in this manner to maintain the respect of my full-time co-workers as a professional."

– Engineer, New South Wales

11.3.6. Hours of work

Recent data indicate that one quarter of engineers (both women and men) work forty seven or more hours per week and 16.9% were working more hours than they worked last year.⁵⁴ Of respondents to the 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey, 45% responded that they would prefer to work less hours.⁵⁵ Hours of work can have a significant effect on an employee's capacity to balance work and life.

11.3.7. Workplace culture

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that workplace culture can impact on members' capacity to utilise workplace practices that would assist them with work life balance. For example, one member reported the following;

"When pregnant the first time I inquired as to the prospect of continuing in my job... part-time. I was initially told that this would not be possible as the job could not be done part-time. My boss subsequently changed his mind (due, I suspect, to a good kick up the butt from someone!) but by that time I had decided that, given that there was obviously not going to be a great deal of support, the voluntary redundancy packages on offer at the time were a better financial option....

After I left [the company] I spent some time working as a consultant/contractor...I find it completely ridiculous that if you look for a part-time engineering job (or indeed most technical jobs) it does not exist, but if you turn up as a consultant or contractor...and say you have "2 days a week available to devote to a particular contract" then this is well received. This just highlights how much of the issue is prejudice about what can & can't be done part-time!!!!!"

– Communications Engineer, Tasmania

⁵⁴ APESMA (2008) *Professional Engineer Remuneration Survey Report June 2008*

⁵⁵ 2007 APESMA *Women in the Professions Survey Report* (available at http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp).

As reported in the Association's recent submission to the Productivity Commission's Inquiry into Paid Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave one member gave feedback to the Association about the need for much greater education of managers and co-workers regarding the needs of parents:⁵⁶

"There should also be widespread education of managers everywhere (and workers everywhere!) regarding the needs of parents...this would be tremendously helpful to all concerned."
- Scientist, New South Wales

APESMA therefore urges the committee to recommend greater education and campaigning with employers, employees and the community on the rights of employees and the benefits to employers and industry of providing family friendly workplaces.

11.3.8. Childcare

APESMA members have reported that the access and affordability of quality childcare can affect their capacity to balance work and family and participation in the workforce. In some areas waiting lists for childcare can be as long as one or two years and therefore a place may not be available at the time a person would have otherwise returned to work.

A member also recently reported to the Association the lack of coordination between the education, childcare sectors and work requirements can be a problem for her:

In Tasmania the kindergarten year is a disaster. Children cannot go to before/after school care until they turn 5 but start kindy at 4 – what do you do for the months until they turn 5????? Pre-school care (the only option) is not designed to suit school hours and often is not co-located with the school.
- Communications Engineer, Tasmania.

11.3.9. "An employer with vision can keep women engineers"

Members have told the Association of some very positive experiences of their employer being proactive in encouraging work/life balance and the difference that this makes, including to their loyalty to the employer and retention in the profession. A water industry employee recently reported to APESMA her experience returning to work after taking maternity leave:

"I liaised with my old manager to come back to work part time (2 days per week)... My manager has been extremely understanding when family responsibilities... have prevented me

⁵⁶APESMA Submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into paid maternity, paternity and parental leave, p15, available at: www.pc.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/81430/sub204.pdf

from coming to work, and I have been able to access carers leave and flexible working hours.....

While working part time I was involved in a number of interesting projects... At the end of last year, I went for and was awarded a competency (and pay!) upgrade ...

The positive experiences that I have had have made me incredible grateful to my manager, and loyal to [my employer] as an organisation."

- Water Industry Employee, New South Wales

Another member story provides an example of retention in the profession. The member reported that she was having trouble balancing work and family. She had a supportive manager and was able to negotiate part time hours (including work from home) that met her needs. The member has continued to work as an engineer and told the Association:

"It is my understanding that many female engineers leave the profession after a decade because it is still a "boys club" with working arrangements designed for male breadwinners. I want to let you know that an employer with vision can keep women engineers if willing to look outside the square."

- Civil Engineer, New South Wales

11.3.10. Urgent action required on work/life balance

Facilitating work/life balance for men and women is an important part of enabling women's participation in the workplace, retention in the professions, career progression and ultimately eliminating the gender pay gap. Whilst some employers are genuinely encouraging work/life balance, this is not the case with all employers and it is therefore essential to have measures in place to ensure that employees are able to effectively balance work and life.

11.3.10.1. Work/life balance is an issue for employees on all incomes and therefore APESMA urges the Committee to recommend that current award coverage for those earning over \$100,000 should remain. Awards have traditionally provided an important safety net of employment conditions (including those that assist with work and life balance) whilst providing flexibility. It is therefore essential that current workplace rights and entitlements are not removed from many employees.

11.3.10.2. Award test cases have provided a transparent mechanism for assessing proposals to meet the changing needs and concerns of the community. Test cases on issues related to providing family friendly workplaces have been extremely important in ensuring the employment

conditions across the workforce (and not limited to particular workplaces) are more reflective of the needs of employees and industry. This has included providing for unpaid parental leave, carers and bereavement leave and the right to request greater unpaid parental leave and part time work in specific circumstances. It is therefore essential that the new system provides opportunity for continued updating of awards and the National Employment Standards to reflect changing community needs. The legislation should enable a regular process rather than being dependent on changes to legislation. Any process to enable this must be transparent and ensure proposals are assessed on their impact and merit without undue political influence.

11.3.10.3. The new National Employment Standards must enable employees to balance work and life and therefore APESMA urges the Committee to recommend some amendments including:

- The right to request flexible working arrangements should not require a qualifying period.
- The right to request flexible working arrangements should not be limited to those with children under school age and should apply to all with needs emanating from carer responsibilities (including those who care for elderly parents, children of school age, etc).
- Parental leave contained in the National Employment Standards should enable the right to request concurrent unpaid parental leave up to eight weeks as per the award test case standard.
- There is no certainty over how disputes regarding the National Employment Standards will be resolved, nor are there any prescribed remedies or penalties in relation to the right to request flexible working arrangements. This uncertainty needs to be resolved. The need to resolve disputes in a timely fashion is particularly relevant in matters relating to family responsibilities as those responsibilities which brought about the dispute would normally continue whilst the matter is being resolved.

12. Discrimination

12.1. In addition to the systemic discrimination that is endemic in the gender pay gap and many of the barriers to career progression which are more prevalent amongst women, some technical professionals continue to experience direct discrimination. One of the alarming results of the survey question from the 2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey presented earlier in Graph 14 was that 9.1% of respondents answered that discrimination had a significant effect, 14.4% had a moderate effect and a further 27.4% had a minor effect on their career advancement.⁵⁷ Whilst the result was not as common as other factors, it is alarming because it is likely to reflect a level of direct discrimination which should not be occurring at all. A recent survey

⁵⁷ An assumption is made that most respondents are not likely to include indirect or systemic discrimination when answering a survey question about discrimination. *2007 APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report* (available at http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp).

conducted by Engineers Australia found that 42.3% of women respondents had experienced discrimination in their work as an engineer, predominantly gender based.⁵⁸ It is therefore important that addressing discrimination be included in any strategy to eliminate the gender pay gap.

- 12.2. APESMA recently made a submission to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee Inquiry into the effectiveness of the *Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act 1984* in eliminating discrimination and promoting gender equality in which it outlined the continuing discrimination that technical professionals continue to face and supported the recommendations of the Australian Council of Trade Unions to better address the issue. APESMA urges this Committee to support a more proactive approach to discrimination legislation (such as that outlined in the ACTU submission), recognising its impact on the gender pay gap.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1. A gender pay gap continues to persist in technical professions and a new approach is required to address this issue.
- 13.2. A fair industrial relations system with an effective safety net for professionals and which enables greater collective bargaining is vital.
- 13.3. Traditional approaches which respond to gender based occupational segregation, whilst essential, will not wholly eliminate pay inequity as is evidenced by its existence within male dominated professions. Therefore, greater awareness, transparency and accountability of pay outcomes at the workplace level are needed.
- 13.4. The complexity of the causes of the gender pay gap necessitate the establishment of a government body and industry/profession committees that are able to investigate a particular industry or profession with the capacity to make recommendations to government on a wide array of potential causes and remedies to address the gender pay gap.
- 13.5. Ensuring the retention and career progression of women is an essential part of addressing the gender pay gap. This necessitates actions to enable employees to balance work and family including; the continuing access to awards - regardless of income, improvements to the National Employment Standards, the introduction of a statutory entitlement to paid parental leave and greater education to improve workplace culture and understanding of the issues.

⁵⁸ Engineers Australia (2008) *Valuing the Difference: An update on the progress of women in the engineering profession* (available at: http://www.engineersaustralia.org.au/shadomx/apps/fms/fmsdownload.cfm?file_uid=7DA323DA-E3CC-A6FB-8DB3-4D97EFFBBEEF&siteName=ieaust)

13.6. Though it is close to forty years since the equal pay cases the gender pay gap continues to persist and without change there is little to indicate that this will substantially improve. Urgent action is required to ensure that the next generation of women scientists, engineers, IT professionals and community pharmacists are not faced with a gender pay gap and reach the senior levels of their professions with both men and women maintaining work and life balance.

14. Information on APESMA Data Sources

The submission draws on a number of surveys conducted by APESMA (as referenced throughout). Information regarding each of these surveys follows.

14.1. APESMA Women in the Profession Surveys

In 2000, 2002 and 2004 invitations were sent to APESMA women members to participate in the survey. In 2007, in addition to this, member organisations of FASTS were invited to distribute the questionnaire to their members, substantially increasing the response rate, particularly of scientists and broadening the respondents beyond the APESMA membership. All of the survey reports are available at: http://www.apesma.asn.au/women/survey_report.asp.

14.1.1. APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report 2007: 1953 respondents, remuneration and responsibility level data analysed in this report (and included in this submission) comes from the following surveys; APESMA *Professional Engineer Remuneration Survey Report June 2007*; APESMA *APESMA/FASTS Professional Scientist Remuneration Survey Report 2007*; and APESMA *Australian Computer Society Remuneration Survey Report 2007*.

14.1.2. APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report 2004: 535 respondents, remuneration and responsibility level data analysed in this report (and included in this submission) comes from the following remuneration surveys: APESMA *Professional Engineer Remuneration Survey Report June 2004*, APESMA *The Professional Scientist Remuneration Survey Report 2003/2004*, APESMA *The Australian Computer Society Remuneration Survey Report 2004*.

14.1.3. APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report 2002: 800 respondents, remuneration and responsibility level data analysed in this report (and included in this submission) comes from the following remuneration surveys: APESMA *Professional Engineer Remuneration Survey Report December 2001*, APESMA *The Professional Scientist Remuneration Survey Report 2000/2001*, APESMA *The Australian Computer Society Remuneration Survey Report 2001*.

14.1.4. APESMA Women in the Professions Survey Report 2000: 900 respondents, remuneration and responsibility level data analysed in this report (and included in this submission) comes from the following remuneration surveys: APESMA *Professional Engineer Remuneration Survey Report June 2000*, APESMA *The Professional Scientist Remuneration Survey Report 1999/2000*, APESMA *The Australian Computer Society Remuneration Survey Report 2000*.

14.2. APESMA Remuneration Surveys

14.2.1. Professional Engineer Remuneration Survey Reports

The Professional Engineer Remuneration Survey Report is published every six months by APESMA in association with Engineers Australia. A random selection of APESMA and Engineers Australia members are invited to participate each time. As an example of the level of respondents, in June 2008 there were 2,547 respondents.

14.2.2. 2008 Graduate Engineer Employment Survey Reports

This survey, conducted each year, in 2008 had 356 respondents from members of APESMA that had graduated within the last two years. The report is available at:

http://www.apesma.asn.au/surveys/graduates/2008_graduate_engineer_report.pdf.

14.2.3. Professional Scientist Remuneration Survey Reports

From 2005/06 the Professional Scientist Remuneration Surveys have been published annually by APESMA on behalf of the Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS). Invitations to participate are provided to fifty seven member organisations of FASTS, with the respondents drawn from the membership of the organisations that chose to participate. As an example, in 2007 there were 2,548 respondents. Prior to 2005/06 the Professional Scientist Remuneration Survey Reports were conducted biannually by APESMA without the assistance of FASTS. The surveys respondents were APESMA members with much smaller sample sizes; for example in 2004/05 there were 549 respondents.

14.2.4. The Australian Computer Society Remuneration Survey Reports

The Australian Computer Society Remuneration Survey Report is published yearly by APESMA in association with the Australian Computer Society. Each year a random selection of Australian Computer Society members are invited to participate. As an example there were 1,588 respondents to the 2007 survey.

14.2.5. Community and Hospital Pharmacists Remuneration Survey Reports

The Community and Hospital Pharmacists Remuneration Survey Reports are produced by APESMA on an annual basis. The respondents are drawn from APESMA Pharmacists' Division membership, the

Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia's members and a sample from the State Pharmacists Registers. As an example, in 2008, there were 1,281 respondents.

14.3. APESMA Member Surveys

APESMA conducts surveys of members on issues of relevance from time to time. Referenced in this submission was an Employer of Choice survey as outlined below.

14.3.1. APESMA Member Employer of Choice Survey

In 2007 APESMA conducted a survey in which members (excluding those that were self employed) were invited to participate, with 1669 respondents (1412 men and 257 women) completing the online survey regarding characteristics of their employer of choice.