



PAY EQUITY: PART ANSWER TO SKILLS SHORTAGE AND AN ISSUE FOR AUSTRALIA'S ECONOMY?

There is evidence to the inquiry that the pay gap men and women in Australia is increasing again. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations will appear before the House Employment and Workplace Relations Committee in Committee Room 1R3 Parliament House Canberra on Thursday 18 September from 11 am to discuss recent trends in pay equity, state and territory, occupation and industry comparisons, international comparisons, the adequacy of current data collections and possible priority areas.

“The Committee is keen to assess the current situation and make recommendations that will ensure women have equal opportunities in pursuing their chosen employment. Pay equity is a complex and ongoing issue and the current skills shortage makes it essential that Australia address this as soon as possible. Australia has the opportunity to lead the way in what is currently a global challenge.” Ms Jackson said.

The Committee is enquiring into the causes of any potential disadvantages in relation to women's participation in the workforce including, but not limited to:

- The adequacy of current data to reliably monitor employment changes that may impact on pay equity issues;
- The need for education and information among employers, employees and trade unions in relation to pay equity issues;
- Current structural arrangements in the negotiation of wages that may impact disproportionately on women;
- The adequacy of recent and current equal remuneration provisions in state and federal workplace relations legislation;
- The adequacy of current arrangements to ensure fair access to training and promotion for women who have taken maternity leave and/or returned to work part time and/or sought flexible work hours; and
- The need for further legislative reform to address pay equity in Australia.

The Committee will commence the interstate hearings on 26 September and interested persons and organisations are invited to make written submissions to the inquiry.

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

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