

# GENDER PAY GAP FACT SHEET

## What is the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap is the difference between women's and men's earnings, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. It is a measure of women's overall position in the paid workforce and does not compare like roles. (Australia's Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2018).

It can be calculated in a number of ways and this sometimes leads to differences in the figures cited as "the gender pay gap".

As of August 2018, Australia's Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) calculated the national gender pay gap as 14.6%.

The gender pay gap in the Victorian Public Sector was 12 per cent in 2016/17, meaning that women earn on average \$10,197 less than their male counterparts with a median base salary of \$76,487 for females and \$86,684 for males. For those employed under the VPS Agreement, the gender pay gap is 9.5 percent, as at June 2017. This is based on information from the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC).

## Causes of the gender pay gap

Whilst basic undervaluation of the work women do in any job is the starting point for pay inequity, this is compounded by a number of other factors. These include:

### Undervaluing female-dominated occupations

Long held prejudices about women and what they can and can't do have prevented objective assessments of women's work. The most obvious example happens where women's skills are viewed as 'natural attributes' rather than workplace skills. This particularly includes things like caring and nurturing skills and communication skills.

## Discrimination and bias

Although women have made great strides in achieving greater gender equality, sex discrimination still limits opportunities for women.

Discrimination in the workplace can include seeing women as 'less suitable' applicants than men; offering different rates of pay to women compared to men in comparable roles; and overlooking women for particular roles, professional development opportunities, and promotion.

Social norms can dictate that confident women are often seen as pushy and out of place, leading to discrimination where women discount their own skills, experience and suitability for roles or promotion. While often discrimination and bias are unintentional, they can have profound limitations on who is hired for a role, their experience of the workplace, and how they progress and develop over time.

## Women's concentration in part-time and insecure work

Women's concentration in part-time and insecure forms of employment in the public sector has significant implications for gender pay equity.

Women's part-time and contract based employment equates to limited opportunities for advancement and career development, lower levels of unionisation, and in the case of casual employment, fewer employment benefits.

## Barriers to negotiating flexible work

Wider social gender inequality means that many working women carry a greater share of caring roles throughout their life. Time out of the workforce for responsibilities like maternity leave may also hinder progression and career development.

Women often find it difficult to negotiate flexible working arrangements to achieve the level of employment that works for them. Men are also limited access to flexible work arrangements that enable them to contribute to caring roles, which has a compounding effect. The whole economy suffers when women are not supported to reach their full potential at work.

