

Tuesday 31 August 2021

Equal Pay Day highlights the yawning gap between women and men's wages.

31st August is Equal Pay Day – the conclusion of the 61 additional days after the end of financial year that women must work to earn the same as their male counterparts, based on the national average. However according to an ACTU analysis, in ten industries, women have to work as much as double that national average to make the same as men.

Women in industries such as science and technology, finance and healthcare have to work as many as 124 more days than men per year to earn equal pay. On average, full time working women earn \$13,500 less per year than full time working men. This is based on the gender pay gap which in Australia has increased by 0.8% to 14.2% over the last 12 months, according to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

In healthcare and social services women would have to work an extra 95 days each year to make the same amount as men in the same industry. Healthcare workers, a predominantly female workforce, have been on the frontline of the pandemic. They have been overworked and underpaid, working in understaffed conditions even before the pandemic began.

The recent Royal Commission into Aged Care recommended equal pay for the sector, something the Morrison Government has ignored, and which aged care unions are currently campaigning for.

The worst performing industry for gender pay equity is professional, scientific and technical services, where women must work more than double the national average (124 days) additional days to earn the same as men in the same industry.

To close the gender pay gap, the union movement is calling for:

- Changes to our workplace laws that make it easier for women to win equal pay, and to reduce insecure work where women are overrepresented.
- Additional government funding to increase actual rates of pay in underpaid, feminised sectors such as nursing, Early Childhood Education and Care and aged care, and ensure that NDIS funding protects the wages and job security of workers in the sector.
- Stronger workplace rights for parents and carers, including guaranteed and enforceable access to family friendly working arrangements and 52 weeks of Paid Parental Leave.
- Universal free childcare.

Quotes attributable to FSU National Secretary Julia Angrisano,

“Finance and Insurance Industry Gender Pay Gap is 27.5% which means that for workers in the finance and insurance industry, equal pay day falls over 100 days into the new financial year on 8th October 2021. That’s over 100 days just to get equal pay and doesn’t take into account this disproportionately large impact that COVID19 lockdowns and home schooling are having on working women.

“The pay gap has not only increased for finance workers, but we know that in banking, women are more likely to be working in front line customer facing retail branches and are also bearing the burden of working in an environment where they may be exposed to COVID19 and take the virus home to their families.”

Quotes attributable to Professionals Australia CEO Jill McCabe

“Of all industries, the gender pay gap remains highest in Professional, Scientific and Technical Services at 25.3%.

This is a serious problem that will affect the future of the STEM sector.

Professionals Australia's research shows that workplace culture, gender stereotyping, sexual harassment, lack of development and career progression opportunities for women combine to impact negatively on pay equity in STEM.

Significant organisational change underpinned by legal reforms is required to address the underlying factors that contribute to the significant pay gap experienced by women working in STEM."

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil,

"Today we should all take a moment to acknowledge the fact that there are no industries in Australia where women are paid equally to men."

"It is a disgrace that women have to start each year effectively \$13,500 worse off on average than men.

"Women in the workforce are met with so many obstacles; disproportionate caring responsibilities, sexual harassment in the workplace, and a systemic and persistent gender pay gap. The Morrison Government can and must do more to address all these issues.

Media contact: Peter Green 0400 764 200

Industry	Extra days women have to work each year to match men's pay
Professional, scientific and technical services	124
Financial and insurance services	116
Health care and social assistance	95
Rental, hiring and real estate services	86
Mining	76
Construction	73
Information, media and telecommunications	73
Transport, postal and warehousing	65
Wholesale	64
Administrative and support services	63
National	61
Manufacturing	56
Education and training	47
Arts and recreation services	44
Retail	44
Accommodation and food services	43
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	30
Public administration and safety	29