

Media Release: 23 November 2012



WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY AGENCY

Business and Professional Women (BPW) Australia welcomes the amendments to the Equal Opportunity in the Work Place Act legislation and looks forward to the increased assistance the Agency will be able to provide to business, large and small.

“We know that women’s participation in the workforce is increasingly common place, yet women in senior decision making and leadership roles continue to be disproportionately underrepresented,” said Marilyn Forsythe, BPW Australia president.

“We believe that the development over time of industry indicators and benchmarks will help businesses – employers and employees – identify any areas that they could target for improvement; areas where for instance there may not be enough women in their pipeline; where recruitment and turnover is disproportionately high; where access to training is not equitable.” With calls for increased productivity at every turn we know that increasing women’s participation in the workforce will bring big returns – for business and the wider economy - but women will not engage in businesses that cannot demonstrate equitable workplaces and practices. Businesses need to compete on all levels – opportunity, training, remuneration and flexibility to name a few – and these need to be offered equitably regardless of gender.

Employers of choice are celebrated by EOWA and the wider community each year, and their stories provide examples of what may be achieved, but for too long we have had too many eligible employers shirking their reporting responsibilities. “I hope these amendments will signal to industry that Australia is serious about guaranteeing equitable work places for women and all employees,” Marilyn said. Her remarks are echoed by Marie Coleman (National Foundation of Australian Women) who continues to advocate for removal of all barriers to workplace equality

“More thorough data collection will improve the chances of developing effective benchmarks – something that I am sure all business wants to be able to aim for,” Marilyn said. Our membership includes both employers and employees and we know full well how hard it is to recruit and retain staff; we look forward to the Agency being able to assist SMEs in their endeavours to ensure that they have equitable workplaces, allowing them to compete for the best staff available.”

For more information contact Marilyn Forsythe (President) on 0412259656

Media Contact: Sandra Cook (Director of Policy) 0409608344

BPW Australia develops the professional, leadership and business potential of women on all levels through advocacy, mentoring, networking, skill building and economic empowerment programs and projects around the world. For more information go to www.bpw.com.au