



## **Gender Pay Gap – 17.5% - really? Yes. Really.**

Never heard of it? Don't believe it? Don't know anyone who has experienced that? Common reactions. But you can't ignore facts supplied by the ABS this month that confirm the gap in the full time earnings of men and women. And no you can't blame it on overtime either.

Equal Pay Day is Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September. A day that draws attention to the gap and the \$250 per week difference it makes. The high wages in the resources sector only accounts for 3% nationally. The biggest gaps are in health care and financial services.

Marilyn Forsythe, President of BPW Australia, admits that progress on this issue is frustratingly slow. Big business is dragging their feet in the leadership stakes, with almost no change in the number of women chief executives or directors since 2002. Marilyn reminds us that they do however report to the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency on steps taken to ensure equity. She commends the Agency on their extra efforts in releasing new resources.

What about small business? Three quarters of our workforce is employed in the two million Australian small businesses. BPW Australia and economicSecurity4women are urging greater focus on gender equity this Equal Pay Day. They want support for SMEs to ensure they are offering contemporary, gender fair workplaces. Employers are encouraged to have their say and complete the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/eS4WSME>.

Equity issues will be discussed at BPW Equal Pay Events across Australia; NSW is featuring negotiation skills while Victoria is looking at leadership and education in reducing the gap; South Australia has a "dinner party" with a difference; Western Australia has a Q&A with local, state and federal politicians, while Queensland is looking at business leadership with an EOWA Employer of Choice.

Marilyn appreciates that Equal Pay Alliance partner, ACTU, is continuing their work on pay equity using their Trades Hall event to highlight the high incidence of casual and insecure work. High numbers of women in such work impacts their earning potential and financial security.

"Will achieving true pay equity make business unviable? Or rather will the ongoing pay gap make business unsustainable?" asks Marilyn. "We are asking people to join the conversation; follow us on Facebook (Equal Pay Day Australia); carry a red bag on Sunday; and when paying for that Father's Day lunch – ask for a 17.5% discount."

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*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](http://www.bpw.com.au) [Twitter.com/equalpayday](https://twitter.com/equalpayday) or @equalpayday*