



## **Media Statement**

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Monday, August 31, 2009

### **WA the worst in the nation**

The gender pay gap in Western Australia continues to be the worst in the nation.

Ahead of Equal Pay Day tomorrow, WA Equal Opportunity Commissioner Yvonne Henderson said that in WA female earnings are on average 26% lower than male earnings.

“Women in Western Australia earn on average \$378 per week less than men,” Commissioner Henderson said.

“In Western Australia many believe pay inequity is due to the mining industry. This is not correct - the gap is able to be demonstrated across many sectors.

“For example, in the health sector, the gap is a whopping 41%.”

Ms Henderson also supported the Equal Pay Alliance, comprising of more than 130 business and community groups, which has demanded the Federal Government introduce mandatory audits of pay rates.

“Western Australia has the widest gender pay gap of any state and this has worsened over recent years. This should be a source of deep concern for all West Australians.

“The onus should be on employers to ensure pay equity is enshrined in their workplaces.

“The Government needs to require employers to perform audits on the pay of their male and female employees and to report on what action they are taking to reduce the gap.

“When I presented my submission to the Federal Parliament inquiry into pay equity last year, there was widespread acknowledgement that lack of pay equity was a major problem in Australia and it still continues today.

“The Commission recommended in its most recent review of *The Equal Opportunity Act* that a gender duty should be enshrined in legislation.

“This would require employers to show what steps they have taken to demonstrate improved gender equality in the workplace.

“It is simply unacceptable that women are working the equivalent of 14 months to earn the same that a man would make in a year.

“It is nearly 40 years since women in Australia were officially awarded equal pay for equal work, yet in WA they are still earning on average 26% less than men.

Equal Pay Day is held on Tuesday 1 September in Australia this year, to signify the point into a year that a woman must work to earn what a man made in the previous financial year.

For more information on gender pay equity: <http://www.equalpayday.com.au/>

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**FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENT: Commissioner Yvonne Henderson  
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