

October 6, 2009

Media Statement

Queensland disability support workers win pay rises in equal remuneration claim

“A great win in the fight for equal pay”, was how WA Equal Opportunity Commissioner Yvonne Henderson described a recent decision by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.

The decision granted significant pay rises of up to 27% to workers in the female-dominated disability support industry.

“This decision shows the benefit of an Equal Remuneration Principle in state industrial laws, which allows a predominantly female industry to be compared with a male dominated industry of comparable skill and responsibility,” Ms Henderson said.

“One of the major stumbling blocks to achieving equal pay in Australia is the marked sex segregation of our labour force.

“Female dominated industries have traditionally been lower paid than male-dominated areas.

“An Equal Remuneration Principle permits a tribunal to compare workers in very different occupations to assess qualifications required, skill levels and work performed.

“Western Australia would greatly benefit from an Equal Remuneration Principle.

“Cases brought under these principles in New South Wales and Queensland have greatly benefitted lower paid female workers by recognising the value of the work they perform,” she said.

A full copy of the QIRC decision can be found at:

<http://austlii.law.uts.edu.au/au/cases/qld/QIRCComm/2009/69.html>

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