



# WOMEN@WORK

MARCH 2015

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The International Women's Day March will be held on Saturday, 14 March 2015 this year.

The March will commence at Sydney Town Hall at 11.00 am. Click [HERE](#) for the flyer to share with colleagues and friends.

(<http://psa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/IWD-2015.pdf>)

## HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Much progress has been made to protect and promote women's rights in recent times.

Unions have been at the forefront of much of this progress, including the fight for equal pay, flexible work, equal employment opportunity, paid maternity leave and domestic violence leave.

Many unions of today owe their existence to unions that were established by women.

Women workers started to become more unionised at the start of the century in Australia, largely due to the efforts of a small number of activists such as **SARAH LEWIS, ELLEN MULCAHY, AND MINNIE FELSTEAD.**

(<http://www.vthc.org.au/history/history-of-the-union-movement>)

Their efforts brought about an upsurge in the formation of female unions or female sections of male unions.

Some examples of the unions formed by women are: The Shirt and Collarmakers' Union, the Confectioners' Union, the Domestic Workers' Union, the Laundresses' Union, Matchworkers' Union, The Female Hotel, Club, Restaurants and Caterers' Employees Union.

In Australia, the wage gap between men and women now stands at 18.8% and women are

still overrepresented in insecure employment.

Women also continue to be victims of violence, with rape. However, nowhere in the world can women claim to have all the same rights and opportunities as men. According to the United Nations, the majority of the world's 1.3 billion poor are women. On average, women receive between 30 and 40 percent less pay than men earn for the same work.

and domestic violence listed as significant causes of disability and death among women worldwide.

In Australia, domestic violence is the leading cause of death and injury in women under 45.

The first International Women's Day occurred on 19 March 1911.

The date was chosen as it commemorated the day in 1848 that the Prussian king promised to introduce voting for women – a promise he failed to keep. The date was later moved to March 8.

In Australia, the first female suffrage society was formed in Victoria in 1848. After a long fight, the first women to win the right to vote were those in South Australia in 1895.

In NSW, it was not until 1902 that the fight finally paid off and women were 'allowed' to vote. However, it took until 1962 for Aboriginal women (and men) to finally have full voting rights in Commonwealth elections.

International Women's Day is a great opportunity to celebrate past achievements and continue the fight for full equality.

## CHILDCARE COSTS AT RECORD HIGH

While more than 90 percent of families using paid childcare receive the Child Care Rebate (CCR) which on average covers up to 50

percent of their out-of-pocket. These out of pocket expenses are at an all-time high in Australia.

The average hourly child care fee for all service types in March 2014 was \$7.65, an increase of 5.8 percent since March 2013. Fees varied across service types from a high of \$9.15 per hour for Occasional Care services to a low of \$6.15 per hour for Outside School Hours Care. The average hourly fee for Long Day Care increased by 5.4 percent from the March 2013 to March 2014.

Before Government child care subsidies are taken into account, out-of-pocket costs for families varied from 42.6 percent of weekly disposable income for families earning a gross income of \$35,000 per year, to 17.6 percent for families earning a gross income of \$150,000 per year. (After Government child care subsidies, out-of-pocket costs were reduced to around 10 percent of disposable income across all income ranges<sup>1</sup>).

## GENDER PAY GAP INCREASES

New figures show the gender pay gap has increased to 18.8 percent. This is a rise of 1.3 percent over the past 18 years<sup>2</sup>.

For full time workers, Australian women now earn, on average, \$298.10 less than Australian men each week.

However, the gender pay gap does not take into account part-time earnings. If these were taken into account, the gender pay gap would likely be higher.

A number of often interrelated factors contribute to the gender pay gap including: women working in different industries than men (industrial segregation); the over-representation of women in low paying occupations and under-representation in others (occupational

segregation); the undervaluation of women's skills; and career breaks taken by women to have and raise children.

Institutional influences, such as the way pay is set, also play a role. However, these factors do not completely explain the gender pay gap. Therefore discrimination may also play a part<sup>3</sup>.

## NSW STATE ELECTION, MARCH 2015

With the upcoming election, it is timely to consider the state coalition government's record on policy and funding for women and women's services:

- ♀ Closed over 200 locally based community organisations, including specialist women's refuges;
- ♀ Are planning to make significant cuts to women's health services after the next election;
- ♀ Abolished funding for local International Women's Day events;
- ♀ Back flipped on support for allocating specialised Domestic Violence Sergeants;
- ♀ Cut funding to local courts, making it harder to seek an apprehended violence order;
- ♀ Cut the amount of Victims Compensation available to women who have experienced domestic or sexual violence;
- ♀ Government members voted in favour of *Zoe's Law*, a bill that may restrict women's access to safe and affordable abortions.

<sup>1</sup>Australian Government, Department of Social Services. Child Care and Early Learning in Summary, March 2014

<sup>2</sup>Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2015

<sup>3</sup>Workplace Gender Equality Agency, February 2013

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