



26th August 2008

SIMS | GROUP

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The Secretary,
Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations
House of Representatives
P O Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Re: Pay equity and associated issues related to increasing female participation in the workforce

Dear Sir/Madam,

Thank you for the request to respond these critical issues affecting women in the workplace. Please find below my responses to the following to the terms of reference to this inquiry that are of particular interest to Sims;

A. Adequacy of current data to monitor employment changes and the impact these changes have;

This area is of particular concern as the Industrial Relations “Landscape” has changed significantly over the last 3 years. Further reforms are proposed and employers are finding it difficult to “keep up with” all of the changes. Whilst the current websites (e.g. <http://www.workplace.gov.au> or <http://www.workplaceauthority.gov.au>) do provide a comprehensive overview of changes it does take a considerable amount of time to identify the details of these changes. What would be beneficial is the creation of a specific “section” on these websites dedicated to dealing with employment matters affecting female employees. Employers would be able to “key into” these issues quickly with a click of a button.



B. The adequacy of current arrangements to ensure fair access to training and promotion of women who have taken maternity leave and / or returned to work part time and / or sought flexible hours;

The transition from employment to Maternity Leave and back to employment is a complex issue for all working mothers. Whilst employers are obligated to ensure employment is available, some females returning to work have concerns regarding “going back into their old roles” particularly if those roles had historically been demanding and would not provide an acceptable level of work / life balance. If the demands on work / life balance for these employees have changed the capacity to return to a “different” role may be a more attractive option.

Training programs that provide an opportunity to learn “new or different” skills, encourage and challenge “breaking out” to find new career paths / options may well assist in providing a solution to this issue as well as, ensuring females returning to work or requiring greater flexibility at work are still being provided with roles that are meaningful, stimulating and “real”.

Once again thank you for the opportunity to provide our feedback on these critical issues and we look forward to the outcomes of this report.

Yours sincerely,

Aleathea Maidens
Human Resource Manager Australia & New Zealand