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Community & Public Sector Union
Stephen Jones • National Secretary

7th August 2008

Committee Chair Ms Sharryn Jackson MP
Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations
House of Representatives
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Dear Ms Jackson

Inquiry into pay equity and associated issues related to increasing female participation in the workforce

By way of introduction, the PSU Group of the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) represents over 200,000 employees in the Australian Public Service, the Australian Government public sector, the ACT Public Service, the Northern Territory Public Service, and other sectors including the telecommunications sector, call centres, employment services and radio and television broadcasting.

The CPSU commends the Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations for instigating this inquiry into the causes of any potential disadvantages in relation to women's participation in the workforce.

While there have been significantly advances in the both female participation in the workforce and pay equity over recent years, we at the CPSU strongly believes that inequality still exists in workplaces and that only with structural change will the situation improve.

According to our research into pay rates within the Australian Public Service (APS) all of the agencies that have 3 or more pay grades in the bottom ten also had a workforce that was more than 70% women. This has emerged as a common trend, where both large and small agencies from different areas of government whose workforce have a high percentage of women are more likely to be on the lower end of the pay scale.

We believe that while these very obvious pay discrepancies for female dominated agencies are concerning and deeply inequitable, they are not insurmountable problems. The best way to ensure equal pay for equal work is to develop and implement a framework for all APS agencies that promotes collective bargaining, equality, participation, flexibility and mobility.

The CPSU has a strong interest in this issue would be pleased to appear before the Committee's public hearing to represent the views of Australian Government public sector workers, and to further present our research findings and policy positions.

In addition to this we are currently finalising our detailed written supplementary submission to the inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Jones', with a large initial 'S' and a stylized 'J'.

Stephen Jones
CPSU National Secretary