



### **Inquiry into equal opportunities for women in the workforce**

- The adequacy of current data to reliably monitor employment changes that may impact on pay equity issues
- The need for education and information among employers, employees and trade unions in relation to pay equity issues

Employers should discuss/ disclose pay benchmarking provisions with their employees to ensure that employees understand how their compensation or rate of pay is determined. This is one of the main things discussed in our Firm's induction process with employees to ensure that they understand this concept and the factors that will affect their compensation.

- Current structural arrangements in the negotiation of wages that may impact disproportionately on women

Our Firm benchmarks salary and bonus information with our competitors and pay employees based on a fair, competitive matrix for the skills and experience of the employee.

Employers should ensure that any roles that are held in the majority by female employees are monitored and benchmarked across the industry and across the Firm. Employees on maternity leave or in part time roles should also be paid salary and bonuses at the same level as their colleagues (prorated as necessary) based on their performance. It is important that employers hold a formal annual salary review process and monitor this to ensure that these employees are not overlooked.

- The adequacy of recent and current equal remuneration provisions in state and federal workplace relations legislations
- The adequacy to current arrangements to ensure fair access to training and promotion for women who have taken maternity leave and or returned to work part time and/or sought flexible work hours

**For employees on maternity leave** - Employers should allow employees to maintain access to company information, announcements, training, to allow them to keep up to date with any work related information necessary. The employer should promote open communication and contact the employee on maternity leave if any significant changes occur that will impact them on their return to the workplace and give them the opportunity to partake in training that will be required when they return to the office.

**Returning from maternity leave** - On return from maternity leave, the manager of the employee should ensure that they meet to discuss the role and discuss how business changes may have affected the role. They should also provide or allow access to training or any information necessary for their integration back into the workplace. If the employee is returning on a part time basis, there may be a need for a reduction in workload or a focus on different priorities. This may not be required if the employee is in a job share situation.

Perhaps a guide to taking paternity/ maternity leave and tips on how to integrate back into an office environment would be a good initiative for the government to take on board and make available to the public.

**Promotion Opportunities** - Promotion opportunities should always be available to employees on maternity leave and on part time/ flexible arrangements. The Firm should take responsibility to ensure that there is a formal promotion review process which is monitored, ensuring that employees are not overlooked and equal opportunity for promotion is presented to all employees that have rightfully earned it.

One major concern is that Australia is still one of only two developed countries that do not have provisions for paid maternity leave. Although our Firm has adopted a paid maternity leave benefit to our employees, employees at other Firms are not so fortunate. It would be great to have the government's support to introduce paid maternity leave provisions to support working mothers and their families.

- The need for further legislative reform to address pay equity in Australia

The roles that attract women in the majority need to be benchmarked and monitored to avoid large discrepancies in pay comparative to other roles. Women may be all paid equally for their job, but when it comes to job type, if the role attracts women in the majority this is when the largest discrepancies can occur.