

# Media Release

Friday, 5 September 2014

## SA Chiefs for Gender Equity mark Equal Pay Day with important document signing

On average Australian women who work full-time earn around \$283 less a week than their male colleagues – a staggering 18.2% less.

Latest figures from the ABS (August 2014) show the health care and social assistance industry has the highest gender pay gap (30.7%), followed by financial and insurance services (30%) and rental, hiring and real estate services (29%).

South Australian Equal Opportunity Commissioner Anne Gale said it is the first the national gender wage gap has exceeded 18% and is the widest it's been in 20 years.

Ms Gale said people are surprised to learn, that in this day and age, women in Australia have to work an additional three months to earn the same amount as their male colleagues in one-year period.

Today (Friday, September 5) is *Equal Pay Day* and to mark the date, BankSA is hosting an event with the Equal Opportunity Commission and South Australian Chiefs for Gender Equity, where South Australian CEOs will sign a statement of support for the UN Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs).

The South Australian Chiefs comprise a group of local business leaders who work closely with the Equal Opportunity Commission to address the gender wage gap and promote action that will lead to meaningful changes.

The UN WEPs are a framework for gender equality and are aimed at practical ways of investing, advancing and empowering women in the workplace. In Australia there are currently 16 signatories to the WEPs.

The BankSA-hosted event will see Nick Reade, BankSA; Con Tregakis, KPMG; David Martin, Finlaysons and Rob Stobbe; SA Power Networks, who are also members of the South Australian Chiefs group commit their businesses to the seven WEP principles which comprise:

1. Corporate leadership for gender equity
2. Equal opportunity, non-discrimination and human rights
3. Health, safety and wellbeing
4. Education, training and professional development
5. Enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices
6. Community leadership, engagement and advocacy
7. Measuring and reporting

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Ms Gale, together with the Chiefs, have called for urgent action from government, business and other key stakeholders to close the widening wage gap between men and women.

Ms Gale said the lack of women's engagement in the workplace was a serious productivity issue. Female participation rates, she said, are below that of males by 12.3 per cent with research showing that there is a correlation between a negative impact on economies and low levels of female engagement.

"The wage gap increase of 18.2 per cent means that Australian women are now currently earning just 81.8 cents for every dollar their male colleagues earn, down from an average of 85.1 cents a decade ago," Ms Gale said.

"Employers who address gender equity well will have women in senior roles, flexible work practices, parental and carers leave to enable 'sharing the caring', equitable recruitment practices and good payroll analyses to ensure wage gaps don't exist."

The data also shows that while male salaries have increased by 2.9 per cent over the past year, their female co-workers have only increased by 1.9 per cent. Whilst many businesses have policies in place it is action and best practice in the workplace that will enable men and women to progress their careers at consistent rates.

The Chiefs encourage all business leaders and employers to address gender equity by understanding the wage gap in their own workforce and address the hidden factors that prevent women from reaching the most senior levels.

South Australia's Chiefs for Gender Equity:

Dr David Cruickshanks-Boyd, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Christian Paech, Santos

Nigel McBride, Business SA

Nick Reade, BankSA

Con Tragakis, KPMG

Rob Stobbe, SAPower Networks

Scott Ashby, PIRSA

David Martin, Finlaysons

Ish Davies, News Corp SA

Michael Harper, Lend Lease