



MEDIA RELEASE

Australian
Council of
Social Service

EMBARGOED 1am Tuesday 12th April 2011

Australians agree: It's time to support equal pay for community sector workers

An overwhelming majority of Australians think community sector workers are underpaid and should be better rewarded for the work they do according to newly released polling from the Australian Council of Social Service.

Over 90% of people believe that workers in community services should be paid more than or equal to workers doing similar jobs in other industries, according to the polling conducted by EMC.

The findings come as Fair Work Australia prepares to retire today to consider the outcomes of the equal remuneration case, brought by the Australian Services Union on behalf of community sector workers.

Across all demographics the support for equal pay is overwhelming. 32% think they should be paid more and 59% think they should be paid about the same.

"We know the pay gap between community sector workers and those doing equal or comparable work is irrefutable. And with 85% of the community sector workforce women, this constitutes a significant gender pay gap," said ACOS CEO, Dr Cassandra Goldie.

"This poll shows that the vast majority of Australians want community sector workers to be properly supported for the important work they do. Community sector employee's work with the most vulnerable people in Australia, in some of the most challenging environments and this should be recognised with adequate remuneration.

"Australia's not-for-profit sector employs nearly 900,000 people and contributes \$43 billion to the nation's GDP. It is only reasonable for that contribution to be recognised. Government support is critical to achieve this, as much of the work of community services is funded by governments.

"Yet the Productivity Commission found that government funding routinely covers only 70% of the cost of delivering these vital services. It is workers who have been suffering as services stretch inadequate resources to support some of the most vulnerable people living in Australia.

"The success of the equal remuneration order before Fair Work Australia will only be as effective as the willingness of those who support the sector through funding.

Australian Council of Social Service

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“The challenge is now on the State and Federal Governments’ to support the findings of the Full Bench of FWA in this important case by committing to full funding of equal pay for community sector workers,” Ms Goldie said.

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Q. People who work in community services such as disability, aged care, family support, mental health and counselling are predominantly female and tend to be paid less than workers doing similar jobs in other industries.

Do you think that workers in community services should be paid more, less or about the same as workers doing similar jobs in other industries?

	Total	Vote Labor	Vote Lib/Nat	Vote Greens	Men	Women	Age 18-34	Aged 35-54	Aged 55+
Paid more	32%	42%	25%	43%	29%	35%	34%	33%	29%
Paid about the same	59%	52%	66%	55%	61%	56%	51%	60%	67%
Paid less	3%	2%	4%	-	4%	2%	5%	2%	3%
Don't know	6%	3%	5%	2%	6%	7%	10%	6%	2%

State-by-state

	Total	NSW	QLD	VIC	SA	WA	OTHER
Paid more	32%	32%	30%	36%	23%	35%	37%
Paid about the same	59%	60%	57%	55%	66%	61%	55%
Paid less	3%	2%	4%	4%	5%	1%	-
Don't know	6%	6%	9%	5%	6%	3%	7%
N=	1083	359	212	271	90	107	44

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