



AUSTRALIAN GENDER  
EQUALITY COUNCIL  
*working for balance*

28 November 2018

## **Australian Gender Equality Council supports WalkOutOz in peaceful protest for equal pay**

The Australian Gender Equality Council (AGEC) supports the #WalkOutOz team to stage a peaceful protest against the gender pay gap and economic insecurity. The protest will take place on December 5 2018 at 3.50pm, when men and women across Sydney will leave their workplaces and gather at Martin Place.

The walkout time of 3.50pm represents the additional 70 minutes per day of work that women work for free as a result of the gender pay gap, which stands at 14.6% according to the latest Workplace Gender Equality Agency research<sup>1</sup>.

The aim of the walkout is to spread awareness of the gender pay gap at an employer, colleague and public level, in a bid to drive further action around closing it.

AGEC Chair, Victoria Weekes, commented “Despite legislation of the Equal Pay Act in 1969<sup>2</sup>, women continue to experience pay inequity which starts at the outset when female graduates earn 11% less than their male counterparts<sup>3</sup>. Research shows that girls earn 27% less pocket money than boys<sup>4</sup>, and women currently retire with 58% as much superannuation as men<sup>5</sup>. The result is that women’s lives are bookended by economic disadvantage; this is financial exploitation of women by the existing system. As Australia’s first independent national body, AGEC is dedicated to driving public awareness in a bid to stop this exploitation.”

#WalkOutOz was convened by a group of volunteers, similar to AGEC, who all found they had shared negative workplace experiences when it came to pay. These ranged from finding out their male colleagues earned more for the same role, to being forced to work full time hours for a part-time salary. Founder Fi Bendall said “With our walk-out, we aim to raise awareness of the disadvantage of Australian women in the workforce. The gender pay gap varies greatly from sector to sector, and in financial services, is as much as 30%. In addition to the superannuation gap, and 1 in 2 women being discriminated against for being mothers, these issues all contribute to the lack of economic security for women. Unfortunately these issues are not well known or understood by the general public or the workforce, and so our rally will demonstrate the need for change.”

Ms Weekes continued, “Australia has fallen 12 places on global gender equity rankings over the last 8 years<sup>6</sup>. More recently, Australia was cited as being of grave concern according to a recent United Nations report when it comes to the treatment of women<sup>7</sup>. We only need to look to Iceland and France, which now penalise companies for non-compliance in pay equity to know that change is possible. We want to inspire the working community and the wider public with those examples, and encourage them to aim for change for all women.”

Ms Weekes, Ms Bendall and Dr Eva Cox, Feminist Academic, Adjunct Professor UTS, will present at the rally in Martin Place.

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<sup>1</sup> [WGEA Equal Pay Day Media Release August 2018](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Handbook](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Westpac Kids & Money Report 2016](#)

<sup>5</sup> [ASFA Women’s Economic Security in Retirement Media Release May 2018](#)

<sup>6</sup> [World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report 2017](#)

<sup>7</sup> [United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women July 2018](#)

## ABOUT AGEC

AGEC is Australia's first independent, national body dedicated to driving gender equality. It has a member network representing over 500,000 women and girls, all of whom seek the same rights and opportunities when it comes to pay, superannuation and treatment in the workplace and society.

AGEC has the following four driving principles:

1. To act as an authoritative and independent voice for gender equality in Australia
2. To advocate for and raise awareness of gender equality in Australia
3. To develop research driven policy in the area of gender equality in Australia
4. To raise awareness of the impact upon gender equality of policy and legislation

### **About the Speakers:**

Victoria Weekes, Chairperson Australian Gender Equality Council:

*A professional non-executive director with over 30 years' experience in the financial services industry in senior executive roles in major listed companies, Victoria has been a vocal advocate for gender equality in the financial services sector over a number of years and was the inaugural Chair of the Women in FINSIA Committee. With Victoria's leadership FINSIA produced the world first video series "The Lightbulb Moments", where leaders share their personal stories on why gender diversity is a critical priority for business and founded "Bring Our Daughters to Work Day".*

Fi Bendall, CEO The Female Social Network (one of the Founders of #Walkoutoz)

*As a 2018 and 2017 International Stevie Winner of the Most Innovative Woman of the Year, with a further 6 International Stevies awards & Westpac / AFR 2015 100 Women of Influence, Fi is a highly respected thought leader and equality advocate.*

Dr Eva Cox, Feminist Academic; Adjunct Professor, UTS:

*An unabashed feminist, Dr. Cox passionately promotes inclusive, diverse and equitable ways of living together. Her 1996 book 'Leading Women' explained why women who made a difference were usually labelled "difficult", a label she wears. She has been an academic, political adviser, public servant, and runs a small research and policy consultancy.*