

EQUAL PAY

What is the position in Australia ?

The position in Australia is an unsatisfactory one. In 1953 two States indicated to the Commonwealth Government that they were in favour of the ratification of I.L.O. Convention 100. Since then only N.S.W. has translated its indications into action by means of Equal Pay legislation, introduced in 1958, which has given Equal Pay to female workers in somewhat limited circumstances.

Tasmania has recently introduced to Parliament a more comprehensive Bill to provide for Equal Pay, but the fate of the legislation is not yet known.

The Commonwealth Government leans to the view that it cannot ratify the I.L.O. Convention until all its member States have passed the necessary legislation — and it does not seem disposed to lead the way by giving Equal Pay to its own servants, as the New Zealand Government has recently done.

This then is the Challenge

Australia's Governments — State and Federal — must be persuaded to act promptly. Time is running out. Patches of unemployment, advancing automation, the "population bulge" now leaving schools to enter industry all mean that action must be taken **NOW** to ensure that the equity and protection of Equal Pay are extended throughout Australia.

This can only be achieved when all employed people are awakened to the considerations involved.

Let no opportunity pass to talk Equal Pay, to stress the necessity for it and to counter un-informed opposition with facts.

"Can a country that is developing as rapidly as Australia retain outdated attitudes towards women's pay and conditions of employment? It is not merely a question of justice for the individual: it is also necessary if we are to satisfy the broader aspirations of our society."

NORMAN MACKENZIE,
British sociologist, 1960.

What do we mean by Equal Pay ?

Why should women have Equal Pay ?

Why should economic equality be introduced ?

Would not Equal Pay undermine the Wage Structure built around the Basic Wage ?

Who supports Equal Pay ?

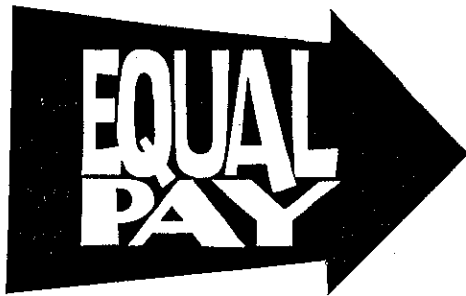
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**PRESS FOR
EQUAL PAY**

**A.C.S.P.A. ANSWERS THESE
QUESTIONS AND STATES THE**

Trade Union
Equal Pay
Committee c.1940-1965
UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES
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What do we mean by Equal Pay?

We mean Equal Pay for work of equal value, without regard to the sex of the person performing the task.

Equal Pay in this context is not an ogre threatening to disrupt our whole economy — it is a sensible cry for common justice, as important to men as to women.

It does **not** mean Equal Pay for all workers. It **does** call for an end to be made to the employment of female labour at cheap rates to perform jobs which—for the time being—bring higher rates for males who do the same work or work of a similar value.

Why should women have Equal Pay?

When a job is vacant, even a simple one, certain qualifications are required:—it may be simply, ability to read and punch a key-board — it may be ability to use a slide-rule — the demand may be for a university graduate. Whatever the requirements of the position, they will be the same whether the prospective employee is male or female. Why then should not the pay be the same? Should a woman be asked to give the same for less? Should she be prepared to **accept** less?

Why should economic equality be introduced?

Single men and women have the same food and clothing bills to pay. They both pay the same in fares, medical expenses, accommodation, income tax and all other necessities.

Those who argue that women have fewer financial responsibilities would, to follow out their logic, have to insist on different rates of pay for married men with children, married men without children, single men, single women and women with dependants.

EQUAL PAY .

THESE COUNTRIES HAVE RATIFIED I.L.O. CONVENTION 100

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Albania | • Haiti |
| Argentina | • Honduras |
| Austria | • Hungary |
| Belgium | • Iceland |
| Brazil | • Italy |
| Cuba | • Mexico |
| Czechoslovakia | • Philippines |
| Dominican Republic | • Poland |
| Ecuador | • Roumania |
| France | • Syria |
| Federal Republic
of Germany | • Ukraine |
| | • U.S.S.R. |
| | • Yugoslavia |

THESE COUNTRIES HAVE EQUAL PAY IN THEIR PUBLIC SERVICES

- | | |
|---------|-------------|
| Canada | Israel |
| Ceylon | Netherlands |
| Chile | Norway |
| Denmark | Turkey |
| Finland | U.S.A. |
| Greece | Uruguay |
| Iceland | Vietnam |

HOW LONG WILL AUSTRALIA LAG BEHIND?

IT DEPENDS ON YOU

EQUAL PAY .

• EQUAL PAY

Would not Equal Pay undermine the wage structure built around the Basic Wage?

Proponents of this argument use the history of the post-Federation Australian wage structure as a convenient peg on which to hang their objections to Equal Pay.

They say the Basic Wage is based on family needs. Whatever the Federal Basic Wage set out to be in the early 1900's, **it is not a "family wage" now.** Since 1931 it has been related to "the capacity of the economy to pay" and what relevance would "the minimum wage which should be paid to an unskilled labourer in 1907" have, even when adjusted for loss of value of the £1, to present-day standards of family living.

Equal Pay would **not** wreck the wage structure — the cost of a gradual raising of female rates to parity with male rates could be absorbed by our expanding economy without disrupting it.

Who supports Equal Pay?

On an international level, the United Nations — which through its International Labour Organisation has called, in its Convention No. 100, on all member States to grant Equal Pay for equal work without discrimination on the grounds of sex, race or creed.

A list of the countries which have already ratified this Convention appears herein.

