



EQUAL pay day



Aim for pay equity now!

Many people in Australia believe women won equal pay in the 1970s, but they are wrong.

It's almost 40 years since women were officially granted equal pay for equal work by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. Yet, a significant gender pay gap in Australia persists.

- Women in full-time paid work still earn 17 per cent less than men or one million dollars less over a lifetime;
- While women are now more likely to have a tertiary qualification than men, women graduates will earn \$2,000 less than male graduates and \$7,400 less by the fifth year after graduation;
- Fewer than two per cent of ASX 200 companies have a female chief executive officer and only one in 12 board directors are women; and
- Women retire with less than half the amount of savings in their superannuation accounts compared with men.

Our labour market and social structures continue to discriminate against women in employment. On one hand, women have access to unprecedented levels of education and employment. On the other, women continue to shoulder most of the unpaid housework, care of children and care of other dependents with a critical lack of access to childcare services and flexible work arrangements, to enable them to balance those two roles.

A lack of access to flexible work arrangements also

presents a barrier for men to take on a greater share of caring responsibilities. This maintains the status quo of women being disproportionately responsible for caring responsibilities and consequently disadvantaged in the workplace.

We believe this inequity is not acceptable in modern Australia.

September 1 was Equal Pay Day. On average, it takes women 14 months to earn the same amount that men earn in 12 months. Starting from the new financial year on July 1, Equal Pay Day commemorates the day when women's earnings "catch up" to men's.

With members support, we pledge to work towards the eradication of unequal pay through the provision of genuine choices and opportunities for women.

We look forward to your support in highlighting the continuing battle for Equal Pay with employers and the community to achieve reforms so female ASU members don't need to work an extra two months to earn as much as their male counterparts.

If you have any questions or require further support or information sheets, please contact ASU Women's Officer, Maria Kaplanis, via email on mkaplanis@asuvic.com or phone 9342 3410.

Do you work in a community legal centre? *This one's for you...*

Reminder: \$400,000 fund available for...

An issue that has come to the attention of ASU Organisers is that Centres are not availing themselves of the \$400,000 fund that was agreed to as part of the last round of bargaining. This fund was designed for Centres to use for any leave that was agreed to as part of the last Multi Business Agreement (MBA) that was in addition to the leave provisions that were in place at that Centre prior to the MBA. If any staff have taken leave during the past two years that they would not have been entitled to before the MBA, please contact VLA and find out if your Centre is eligible for reimbursement.

MBA update...

As members will be aware, the process for bargaining for the next CLC Agreement has begun. ASU Organisers are part way through a round of meetings at CLCs to discuss what sort of issues members want to see improved in the next Agreement.

So far, the main issue that members have expressed a range of views about is the potential for a new classification structure for CLCs. Interestingly, this discussion has come about at the same time as the Queensland SACS decision that has seen significant improvements to the wages of SACS workers in that State.

The ASU have held some preliminary discussions and have been told that for this round of Bargaining there will be a delegation of staff from Centres representing the sector. The ASU are also seeking interested members to nominate to be part of the bargaining.

If you are yet to have a meeting at your Centre to discuss the MBA, or would like to be part of the Bargaining process, please contact ASU Organiser Leon Wiegard on 0438 060 298 or lwiegard@asuvic.com to arrange a suitable time.

WANTED: ASU members keen to make a difference for Youth Workers

Are you an ASU member who is keen to help develop both the industrial strength and the professional identity of Youth Workers in Victoria?

If the answer is yes, then we need you to get involved with an ASU Youth Workers Sub-Branch to liaise with the Youth Workers Association Development Committee.

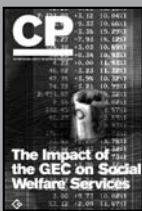
Beginning last year, the Youth Workers Association (YWA) Development Committee has been meeting monthly and have put together a lot of information and done a lot of work towards the launch of a Professional Association for Youth Workers.

The ASU has been liaising with the Committee and interested union members, regarding how we can work together with the Association to ensure the best outcome for Youth Workers and ultimately young people.

Some of the main aims of the YWA are to advocate for the professional development of Youth Workers, increase professional standards, deepen the understanding and promote a professional identity for Youth Workers and improve outcomes for young people

A model for how the Association will operate has been developed and will be presented at the YACVic conference later this year.

The ASU wants to hear from members who are keen to be involved in establishing a formalised Sub-Branch of union members to further develop the relationship with the Association, in order to ensure the industrial interests of Youth Workers are both protected and advanced, and work in collaboration with the Association! To register your interest, contact Lisa Darmanin via ldarmanin@asuvic.com, or 9342 3470.



Care Professional

The third edition of the first national professional journal for community sector workers is now available. We hope you find *Care Professional* a valuable forum for contemporary debate about the issues that confront workers in the industry, especially as we aim to build a more inclusive society - a society that embraces opportunity for all. This journal helps in our efforts to achieve such a goal, providing considered discussions and diverse ideas on our work to address disadvantage in the community. *Care Professional* will keep you informed and provide critical commentary from practitioners and thinkers who are intimately linked to the SACS industry.

If you didn't receive a copy of the magazine in this mail out you can download a softcopy at www.asumembers.org.au/downloads/SACS/AS559_CPMag_050509_Web.pdf Future copies will be available free of charge for ASU members who request one - by emailing jfleming@asuvic.com Non-ASU members can buy a subscription, by going to www.asumembers.org.au/downloads/SACS/Care/cp-subscribe.pdf

RESPECT THE WORKERS! SUSTAIN THE SERVICES!

Campaign Update

At the time of going to print, a round of meetings with members around the state was underway, reporting on some important issues that members need to consider, including ASU deliberations on how to achieve the outcomes of the Queensland Equal Pay decision in other states and on the progress of Portable Long Service Leave.

National Committee meets to consider implications of Queensland Equal Pay case.

Members will be aware that in May of this year the Queensland Industrial Commission granted wage increases of between 18 and 42 per cent to SACS workers on the basis of Pay Equity and work value, with the decision having significant implications for members in all State and Territories.

The ASU National SACS Coordinating committee (which is made up of SACS reps from every State and Territory) met in Melbourne on August 28 and again on September 11 to consider the implication of the Pay Equity decision for members and how this might impact on our existing campaigns and enterprise bargaining strategies.

As reported to the mass meetings, the National committee is considering a number of significant issues:

- Can the Queensland decision be translated to members in other states?
- Can the Queensland decision be translated into the Federal IR system or other state IR Systems?
- The Queensland decision is based on a legal principle that operates in Queensland. Would this principle be used in the Federal system if we were to run an Equal Pay case?
- How would any decision on Equal Pay impact on bargaining?
- Are the Commonwealth and the states open to discussion about the implications of the Queensland decision?
- How does all of this relate to the Award Modernisation process?

National Committee seeks meetings with government.

As a result of these meetings, the National Committee is now in discussions with various governments about a possible way forward on all of these issues. Should these discussions be successful, the ASU and members will need to assess what this would mean for bargaining, our existing funding campaigns and for the new SACS Modern Award. It is hoped that we will be able to provide members with more detailed information in early October.

What this means for the Respect the Workers Campaign in Victoria...

At this point, the above questions still need to be answered. However, what is certain is that to date, there is no Victorian Government commitment to improve funding to the sector for fair wages and conditions.

It is essential that here in Victoria we keep the up the momentum and pressure on the State government. We need to make it clear that we are no longer prepared to accept pay and conditions that are significantly lower than other workers who do the same or similar work.

The Victorian Government has form when it comes to resisting funding wage increases for those workers for which they are responsible – see the ambulance paramedics as the most recent example. Any additional state government funding **WILL NOT COME EASY**.

One way to show our determination to succeed is to do what ASU members at a number of workplaces have now done – endorse a new approach to EBA negotiations that is focused on achieving significant pay increases and improvements to conditions.

One of the reasons that we have ended up so far behind our public sector counterparts is that in the past, ASU members in the 'not for profit' sector negotiated pay and conditions based on existing sector funding arrangements. Effectively, funding arrangements negotiated between sector peaks and government created a 'cap' on what ASU members were able to achieve in terms of improvements to pay and conditions at their workplaces.

However, ASU members have now determined to negotiate to achieve wages and conditions at their workplace which are based on what they believe is the fair value of the work that they do.

This approach will work in conjunction with any other activities that relate to our campaign.

ASU members at a number of agencies have already endorsed claims for negotiations at their workplace that, among other things, ask for:-

- Pay increases of up to 50 per cent;
- 18 weeks paid parental leave;
- Portable long service leave;
- Commitments related to occupational health and safety.

Kicking off this approach are ASU members at Annie North, Anglicare, Barwon Community Legal Centre, Barwon Youth, Bethany Community Support,

Community Connections (Vic) Ltd, Council on the Aging, Foundation House, Iramoo Youth Refuge, MIND, North East Housing, Port Phillip Community Group, Sacred Heart Mission, Salvation Army - Westcare, Salvation Army – St Kilda Crisis Service, South West Community Legal Service, Time For Youth, VACRO and Vic AIDS Council.

At each of these workplaces, members have already initiated negotiations with these outcomes in mind.

In addition, ASU members at various Community Health Centres have resolved to push their claim for improvements to pay and conditions that will bring them in line with their public sector counterparts. Members at Bendigo CH, Bentleigh Bayside CH, Cobaw CH, Darebin CH, EACH, Goulburn Valley CH, Grampians CH, Inner South CH, Merri CH, North Richmond CH, Plenty Valley CH, Ranges CH and Sunbury CH have all reiterated that they are not prepared to simply accept a minimal outcome in negotiations but want to achieve rates of pay that represent their 'fair value'.

And stay tuned. As we speak, ASU members at a number of other SACS agencies are going through the process of endorsing a Log of Claims based on this new approach. We will keep you posted on the progress!!

By doing this, ASU members are saying that no matter what happens, they will not accept sub-standard wages and conditions any longer.

A Portable Long Service Leave Scheme – getting closer?

At the time of going to print, the Portable Long Service Leave Sector Reference Group charged with consulting with the Government on the proposed scheme was advised that the Government had decided to implement a Centralised Fund, to begin in July 2010. This has been applauded by unions involved, and our members, as the right way to go.

However, at the last minute, as legislation is about to be introduced in Parliament to enable progress to continue for a July 2010 implementation date, some employers and peak bodies are now publicly lobbying for a delay in the implementation of such a scheme, on the grounds of, amongst other things, cost and administrative complexity.

The ASU is extremely disappointed in this suggestion, as the biggest asset that the community sector has is the skilled community workers who devote their time and energy to the sector, as evidenced by the vast majority of community service

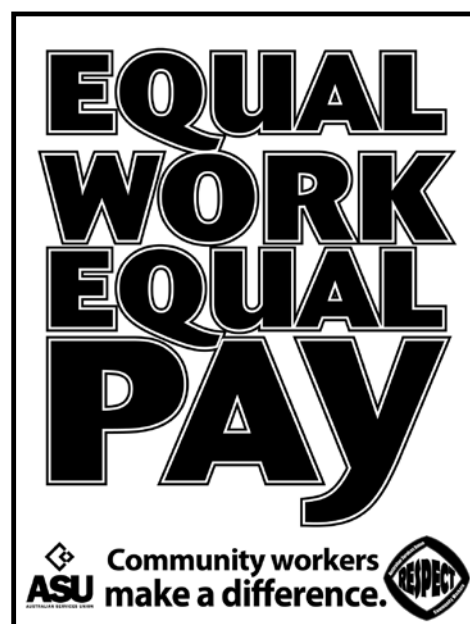
funding being devoted to salaries and associated costs. We all know that in order for an organisation to survive, they must look after their key assets (workers!). As ASU members well know, the hours for workers in the community sector are often long with an unrelenting work load. If the community services can not look after their workers at the most basic level by providing and assisting in the facilitation of portability of long service leave, then services will start to or in some cases continue to break down, as experienced and skilled workers move to where they can get basic conditions, such as portability of long service leave.

The benefit of a PLSL scheme will increase over time. The sooner it is implemented, the sooner the benefits will be felt. Workforce sustainability tells us that further delays will be too late for many of our members who are already considering leaving.

As such, the ASU does not believe that it is in the community's best interest, the interest of ASU members or community organisations to delay the introduction of portability of long service leave. The ASU continues to hope that this opposition will turn into a collaborative approach to overcome the challenges, and still achieve portability of long service leave in 2010. The ASU has been buoyed by the fact that so many community organisations have accepted the invitation to work with us on this vital issue that strikes at the heart of sector sustainability.

For a complete update on these developments, make sure members attend your closest mass meeting, if it is still coming up.

If you want to find out how you and your colleagues could come on board and be part of this, contact the ASU office on 1300 855 570.



ASU Commences National Job Services Australia Reconnection Project

The national ASU has received funding from the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations for a project to reconnect workers from the Employment Network to Job Services Australia employers. The project will run for four to six months and commenced in August 2009. Julie Kun is the National Coordinator and has taken on the position as a secondment from our State Branch. The project will also include several state-based Organisers across Australia.

As a result of the project, the ASU will revamp and relaunch the very successful 'Save Our Jobs' website. The website will provide information on employment opportunities as well as information on worker entitlements and rights. The project will also provide us with an opportunity to produce and widely disseminate information to JSA employees about their entitlements under the Fair Work Act 2009 and the Award Modernisation process and its impact on the CETSS sector.

The ASU, throughout the project, will also be looking at what strategies can be put in place to retain and attract a skilled workforce in the JSA and to gather data on the effect the change over from the Employment Network to the JSA has had on workers.

If you would like more information about the project, or would like a JSA project organiser to visit your workplace, you can call Julie Kun on (03) 9342 1540 or email at jkun@asu.asn.au



FEELING THE HEAT workers' experience, knowledge and understanding of job stress

**Do you work in the Community sector?
Do you have something to say about job stress?
Can you contribute a once off 1½ to 2 hours?**

It is important to discover workers' views and experiences of job stress: what is happening and what can be done to lessen job stress?

Your views are important.

Opportunity to participate

If you work in the community sector (clinicians, direct care staff and administrative workers), you can join a qualitative study looking at workers' experiences, knowledge and understanding of job stress.

You can attend either a focus group or an individual interview. To obtain information on this research and /or be a participant, please call **Lorraine Harrison** (Social worker & PhD student) on 0438 307 002 Or email lorraine.harrison@live.vu.edu.au



**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

**A NEW
SCHOOL OF
THOUGHT**

RESPECT THE WORKERS! SUSTAIN THE SERVICES! *Keep the Date!*

"This ASU meeting of members resolves to continue to do whatever it takes, to achieve our campaign objectives.

We call on the Victorian Government to:

- Fund equal pay for Victorian SACS workers now and;
- Deliver on their PLSL commitment without any delay

Between now and December ASU members will pressure the Government to deliver on these objectives by:

- Holding a rally November 10
- Conduct a mass email campaign to support PLSL
- Encourage supportive employers to tell the Government that they support a PLSL Scheme now!

Further, ASU members call on the union to continue to lobby employers, peaks and state and commonwealth governments to achieve these outcomes."

**So, mark NOVEMBER 10 in your diaries now!
All members are called to attend a
mass rally at state parliament on this day
to send a loud and clear message!**

Equal Work Equal Pay NOW.

Further details about the time and transport arrangements will be forwarded to members. You can also check the website at www.asuvic.asn.au