

Ms Helen Conway  
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## Men's Health Australia



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20 January 2012

Dear Ms Conway,

I refer to your media release of 18th January (copy attached).

While we strongly support your call for greater transparency around salaries for graduate jobs, there appears to be no evidence of gender pay discrimination in the December 2011 GradStats Report cited in your media release. The report states quite clearly that,

“Over the years, GCA research has suggested that overall differences in median starting salaries between males and females can be partly explained in terms of the differing enrolment profiles of male and female students. Male respondents have tended to be in the fields of education more highly ranked according to starting salary while females have tended to come from the middle ranked fields. An examination of the fields in the top five ranks in terms of starting salaries (dentistry, optometry, earth sciences, engineering and medicine) shows that only 7.2 per cent of female respondents are within these fields, as opposed to 25.8 per cent of males (with the field of engineering the major factor in this difference). The fields occupying ranks six to ten (which include female dominated education and paramedical studies) account for 42.1 per cent of females and 22.9 per cent of males.

“While this initial analysis helps to explain part of the overall earnings difference seen here, there are many other factors that interact to produce observed differences in median starting salaries. When males and females have studied in the same field, differing employment factors such as occupation, type and location of employer, or the hours worked, can also have an effect on earnings. Additionally, some fields of education used in this analysis are aggregations of smaller, related, but relatively heterogeneous fields, and this can lead to earnings differences within the aggregated field.”

Perhaps you have some evidence of discrimination that wasn't published in the GradStats report? If so, we would really appreciate you letting us know. If not, it would be preferable if future EOWA media releases didn't claim sex discrimination when there is no clear evidence of such.

You have our full support for greater transparency around salaries for graduate jobs, as it is only when we have this data that we will know whether or not the gender 'wage gap' is indeed due to discrimination or whether it is due to the different life choices made by Australian men and women (or perhaps some combination of the two).

Yours sincerely,

Greg Andresen  
Researcher and media liaison



**NOTE – STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 5.00 AM WEDNESDAY 18 JANUARY 2012**

## **Grad Salary Stats Don't Add Up for Women**

Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) Director, Helen Conway, is calling on employers to take a long, hard look at their remuneration practices following the release of figures that show female graduates are paid up to 14.3 per cent less than their male counterparts.

“Graduate Careers Australia figures demonstrate that, from day one, female employees are behind the eight-ball across a range of industries when it comes to salaries, earning an average of \$2000 less per year than males,” Ms Conway said.

“Businesses need to take a close look at their recruitment practices to stop this discrimination and ensure they attract and retain the best employees, regardless of gender.”

Ms Conway said discrimination may be embedded in recruitment practices and this could be identified by conducting a simple analysis of salaries by gender for equivalent positions.

“There should be greater transparency around salaries for graduate jobs. Graduates deserve to know that what they are being paid is fair and not influenced by gender,” she said.

EOWA recommends companies conduct regular remuneration audits to identify any pay gaps that may exist in their organisations.

EOWA is committed to helping businesses ensure all employees are paid equal remuneration for work of equal or comparable value. The Agency has a range of tools to help businesses establish whether they have a problem and adjust policies, processes and procedures that may incorporate gender bias.

“The gender pay gap continues to be a problem and this is unacceptable in 2012,” Ms Conway said.

“Making sure graduate salaries are equitable will begin to tackle this problem. Let's give all people a fair go right from the start.”

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