



Employer Reference Group, Terms of Reference

Equal remuneration case for social and community service (SACS) workers

Purpose

The equal remuneration case is a major step towards the realisation of equal pay in Australia. It is also a vital issue of sustainability for not-for-profit social services. By addressing the low rates of pay across the sector in comparison to government and private sectors, the equal remuneration case provides an opportunity to address the problems in workforce attraction and retention that are undermining the sector's capacity to provide social and community services.

The purpose of this brief is to outline the objectives, terms of reference and membership of a sector-led Employer Reference Group to operate over the lifetime of the equal remuneration case for Australian SACS workers and the campaign for funding of any pay rises that follow.

Objectives

The Employer Reference Group is a working group for the not-for-profit social service sector comprising employer organisations, peak representative bodies and unions involved in the equal remuneration case for SACS workers. Its objectives are to facilitate communication and collaboration across the sector through the lifetime of the case and the campaign for funding of any wage increases. It provides a focus for sector organisations to develop strategies and messages in relation to the campaign for funding; and through which to be apprised of developments and provide input into the case.

The more sector organisations support the campaign for funding, the more effective it will be. The purpose of the Employer Reference Group is to support the contributions of organisations across the sector by developing key messages that outline the problems and possible solutions to the poor pay of social and community sector workers and the inability of organisations to attract and retain the workforces they need.

Membership

There is significant interest in the equal remuneration case across the sector and the implications of the case may effect organisations differently depending upon their size, location and sources of funding. At the same time, the size of the Employer Reference Group will determine its capacity and effectiveness. The Employer Reference Group will comprise approximately eight (8) representatives from social services and their representatives, reflecting the diversity across the sector in terms of ethos, objectives, workforce, location, and funding sources.



Terms of reference

The Employer Reference Group will work to facilitate communication about the equal remuneration case and collaboration on the campaign for funding of any pay increases arising. It will target government funding sources in states, territories and the Commonwealth to ensure that funding arrangements cover adequate, market-based wages. It will also work with organisations that do not receive government funding to develop transition strategies in the event of a new award flowing from this case.

Communication

The Employer Reference Group will provide a focal point for disseminating information about major developments in the case including timeframes; identification of stakeholders; and provision of evidence. The Employer Reference Group will be briefed on developments in the case and will be a forum for developing messages about those developments to the sector, the media and the public, including press releases and communication to sector organisations and workers.

Collaboration

Collaboration amongst social service organisations is vital to ensure a coordinated approach to the campaign for funding of any pay rises. The Employer Reference Group will develop key messages and campaign materials to support the work of sector organisations in advocating for better pay and funding arrangements to ensure that social and community service workers receive adequate, market-based wages.

For further information on the equal remuneration case, the Employer Reference Group, or ACOSS work on sector development, please contact:

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