

# Media Release

**Mr Tim Pallas MP**  
Treasurer  
Minister for Economic Development  
Minister for Industrial Relations



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## CLOSING THE GENDER PAY GAP AND BOOSTING EQUALITY

The Victorian Government will develop new educational resources to help smaller organisations access the benefits of greater gender diversity.

To mark Equal Pay Day, the Government released a new report – *Equal pay matters: Achieving gender pay equality in small-to-medium enterprises* – which outlines research carried out by the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission with funding from the Government.

It shows small and medium businesses in Victoria have a limited understanding of gender pay equality, or how they can take measures to close the gender pay gap, and contains 10 recommendations to address barriers to gender pay equality in smaller organisations.

As an immediate response, the Government will fund the Commission to implement the first three recommendations by developing practical and foundational educational resources and guidance on how to close the gender pay gap, while all findings are considered.

The new educational resources will be developed with industry and cover the concept of gender pay equality, how to achieve it and the benefits of workplace diversity for businesses. They will also help organisations to understand their legal obligations to ensure equal pay.

As part of its research, the Commission surveyed and interviewed more than 70 owners and managers of small and medium-sized organisations in three sectors: the arts, financial services, and healthcare or social assistance.

The research noted that the drivers of pay inequality at smaller organisations include limited understanding about the concept of equal pay and how it applies to them.

They face internal issues such as a lack of transparency around pay, limited access to flexible working and parental leave. They're also affected by external drivers such as rigid gender stereotypes and, in some instances, an absence of industry standards.

Data from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency shows the national gender pay gap widened during the pandemic to 14.2 per cent, up from 13.4 per cent last year, with men on average earning \$261.50 a week more than women. The increase was largely driven by higher growth in men's full-time wages, especially in the construction industry.

To view the report, <https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/resources/equal-pay-matters>

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Industrial Relations Tim Pallas

*"It's been proven that equitable workplaces are more productive, have less staff turnover, higher morale and are more profitable – it's only fair to make sure smaller businesses can access these benefits."*

*"Small and medium-sized organisations make up a significant proportion of the Victorian workforce and economy – supporting them with education and resources will make a big difference in reducing the gender pay gap."*

### Quote attributable to Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner Ro Allen

*"Being paid fairly and equally for work of equal or comparable value is a basic human right. Regardless of where we work – or our sex, gender, race or age – we are all entitled to be paid and treated fairly at work."*

**Media contact:** Tom Whitty 0488 084 717 | [tom.whitty@minstaff.vic.gov.au](mailto:tom.whitty@minstaff.vic.gov.au)