



# EQUAL PAY



The 1969 Equal Pay Case was the first of the two major equal pay cases.

Before this time women's wages were set substantially lower than that of their male equivalent (on the basis that the male basic wage contained a "breadwinner" component not applicable to women).

The introduction of equal pay was prompted by a number of factors, including the ILO Convention on Equal Pay, increasing female employment, and the abolition of the Basic Wage in 1967.

The decision granted "equal pay for equal work" - where women perform "equal work" alongside men they should receive equal pay. This was for women in instances where they were assessed as doing exactly the same work as men in traditionally male roles.

However, equal pay was not applicable "where the work in question is essentially or usually performed by females but is work upon which male employees may also be employed". The general female award minimum wage was set at 85 per cent of the male wage.

The ruling stipulated that in cases where men were performing work usually reserved for females, they were entitled to a higher wage than their female colleagues.

# 1969

‘We submit that the case in favour of equal pay for equal work is a matter of simple justice which has been recognised by the unions, the ILO and other world and national authorities.

We believe that Australia has now reached a stage of economic and social evolution where it is possible for women to be awarded remuneration based on their education, training, experience and work contribution without any discrimination or disparity on the grounds of sex alone.

We believe that the universal granting to women of equal pay for equal work would have a profound psychological impact in motivating girls and women to become educated and trained to the limit of their capabilities and consequential improvement in the quality and quantity of the work force in Australia would have incalculable economic advantages to Australia.’

Miss Magoffin, National President of the Australian Federation of Business and Professional Women’s Clubs  
Transcript Vol 1 at pp. 267-268

1969