

Resolution of Council

9 December 2019

Item 3.1

Gender Equity at the City of Sydney

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

The City of Sydney continues to be leader in gender pay equity across Australia's public and private sectors, recently winning the National HR Award for Best Workplace Diversity and Inclusion program.

Gender Pay Equity Reporting

The Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 requires all non-public sector organisations with more than 100 employees to report annually against a number of gender equality indicators, including remuneration.

Councils are not required to report, but following a resolution of this Council in March 2015, the City started monitoring and reporting the difference between women and men's average weekly earnings, reported as a percentage of men's earnings. Mercer Consulting independently reviews these gender pay equity reports.

The City based its 2018/19 Gender Pay Equity report on the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's (WGEA) reporting framework. According to WGEA, Australia's national gender pay gap is currently 14 per cent in favour of men, and in NSW, 14.6 per cent. For public sector organisations, this gap is 10.7 per cent, 17.3 per cent for private sector organisations.

I am pleased that our most recent report reveals an overall gender pay gap of 7.8 per cent in favour of women, meaning that on average, more women are employed in higher paying jobs across the City of Sydney.

When the City compared men and women in equitable roles, there was a small gender pay gap of 1.1 per cent in favour of men. This is an improvement on last year's results of 1.7 per cent.

Of course, serious action on gender equity requires that we address the gender pay gap *and* the gender wealth gap. By the time of retirement, a woman accumulates, on average, half the superannuation of her male counterpart. This is in part because women are more likely to take extended leave to raise and care for children, reducing their ability to accumulate superannuation.

For this reason, I was pleased when this Council unanimously supported my Lord Mayor Minute last year recommending that the City start paying superannuation during the 34 weeks of unpaid parental leave.

Since 31 October 2018, the City has paid superannuation for up to 52 weeks of parental leave, including up to 34 weeks of additional superannuation on the unpaid portion of the first year of parental leave. This is also available to primary carers taking adoption or long term fostering leave and partner leave so that all primary carers – including those in same sex relationships – benefit from this initiative. The City pays this superannuation as a lump sum three months after staff return to work.

Shared Care and Partner Leave

The City and this Council should feel proud of this record, but unpaid care work remains highly gendered. Care work undertaken by women increases considerably after the birth or adoption of a child, and men have less access to family-friendly policies, such as parental leave or flexible working arrangements.

The combination of these factors results in the inequitable interruption of women's careers, and is a major contributor to the gender pay gap.

That is why leading organisations are now extending the support offered to partners or secondary carers when a baby is born or adopted, supporting parents to share the care of children more equally between them.

By offering workplace incentives for secondary carers to take on a more active parenting role with newborn children, we can signal the valuing of care and help to create more care-focused communities. This benefits all parents and their children.

For this reason, I am recommending that the City extend paid partner leave for non-primary carers to support parents with their work and carer responsibilities.

The City of Sydney currently offers employees two weeks paid partner leave on full pay or four weeks at half pay.

The Chief Executive Officer advises me that cost estimates based on the average number of employees who took partner leave at the City over the past four years, suggest that the additional cost of extending paid partner leave for non-primary carers from two weeks to four weeks, would be approximately \$170,000 per annum.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council acknowledge the well-deserved National HR Award for Best Workplace Diversity which recognises the City's achievements in addressing gender pay equity;
- (B) Council note the City's 2018/19 Gender Pay Equity results; and
- (C) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to implement the extension of paid partner leave for non-primary carers from two weeks to four weeks as set out in this Minute, with the funding to be borne within existing operational budgets.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE

Lord Mayor

Moved by the Lord Mayor, seconded by Councillor Scott –

That the Minute by the Lord Mayor be endorsed and adopted.

Carried unanimously.

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