

Meeting	Mid-Term Conference
Date	14-16 June 2017
Title	COST OF RENT – CONTRIBUTING TO INCREASED POVERTY
Resolution	<p>That National Council of Women of Australia, noting the number of women, including single women with families who, in order to maintain a roof over their heads, are paying a rent significantly above a third of their weekly income; which forces them to live in poverty on all their other basic needs like food, clothing, medical and dental needs –</p> <p>Requests the Federal Government to introduce ADEQUATE RENTAL ASSISTANCE to assist those who are in recognised need in order to keep them from becoming homeless and equate more reasonably with the average wage earned by the majority of women, recognizing that this is lower than the average wage earned by men.</p>

The gap between men and women's wages has not closed in 2016 (based on ABS data for November 2015), making women's average earnings **\$277.70 per week less than men**, based on the average weekly ordinary time earnings of women working full-time as \$1,325.10 per week, compared to men who earned an average weekly wage of \$1,602.80 per week, (ABS., Mar 1, 2016)

Women comprise 46.2% of all employees in Australia; 24.8% work full time and 21.4% work part time; and that women constitute 71.6% of all part-time employees and 54.7% of all casual employees, and noting that the Average superannuation balances for women at retirement are 52.8% less than men; (wgea.gov.au) which means that Australian women who need to pay rent, or a mortgage, represent a significant percentage of the population; and

Although rental costs vary considerably (according to locality, the size number of bedrooms and quality of a property, its age and the facilities provided, and that rents depend on the region, city and neighbourhood...) from a bed-sitter at \$250-350 a week to a 3 bedroom house at \$800-1200 a week and that for a significant percentage of women, who pay above one third of their weekly wage or salary in rent, often beyond their capacity to pay, this leads to cuts in food and other necessities like health requirements and medications.

Besides weekly rent, there are fees & bonds which must be paid, often on average, one month's rent in advance, plus a fee for the lease document and a deposit for electricity and gas; plus hidden extras such as a fee for connecting the electricity, gas or telephone; and that this takes renting beyond the ability of many women to pay.

Single women with children, or women caring for others, (disabled or elderly family members) can usually only engage in part-time paid work, or rely on a pension, are usually on a restricted income and find regular payment of an average rent very difficult or beyond their ability to pay.

Women escaping violence often have to leave their former residence and their former life; or those who are drug addicted; with little or no financial support and are often on very low incomes; their ability to pay average rents is virtually impossible, forcing them into homelessness.

REFERENCES

Workplace Gender Equality Agency: Gender Pay Gap Factsheet March 2016
https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/Gender_Pay_Gap_Factsheet.pdf

Australian Bureau of Statistics – Wages Facts: Based on data for November 2015:..Mar 1, 2016 - www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/.../8437AA380B280D73CA257AD9000EB6BB?...
<https://www.livingin-australia.com/salaries-australia/>

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Wage Facts. Full-time earnings in Australia in the second quarter of 2016. (Seasonally adjusted wages – Bureau of Statistics.)
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