

*"NO ONE GETS PAID
MORE THAN THE QUEEN"*

PAY PARITY IN NEW ZEALAND AND ACROSS THE WORLD





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When it was revealed that British actress Elizabeth Foy, who won a Golden Globe for her portrayal of Queen Elizabeth II in *The Crown*, was paid less than her male counterpart, Matt Smith, the producers of the Netflix show scrambled to rectify the anomaly after a barrage of public outrage. "No one gets paid more than the Queen" they announced, but in a world where even a queen has to fight for equal pay, what progress are we making to close the gender pay gap?

THIS YEAR ON 1 JANUARY Iceland was the first country to make it illegal to pay women less than men. Equal pay policies are now mandatory for companies – both private and public sector – with 25 or more employees. Companies that cannot show that they provide equal pay will be subject to fines. The new law is significant because it does not require the female employee to prove that the employer discriminated against her; rather, the company has the burden to prove that its pay practices are fair.

Here in New Zealand, we are making some strides to address the gaps in pay equity, but we still have a very long way to go, particularly if we choose to listen to some of the male commentators that dominate our entertainment industry and airwaves.

One of the most significant moves was the Care and Support Workers pay equity settlement in April, which was historic as it directly addressed the past undervaluation of care and support work. It meant hefty pay increases in three government-funded service sectors which employ mainly women on low rates: aged residential care, home support, and disability services. As is often the case with change, the campaign was driven by a sole individual, primary litigant, rest home caregiver Kristine Bartlett.

Since July 2017 when the new scale was brought in, 55,000 care and support workers have received pay rises of between 15% and 50%. The deal will cost the Government more than \$500 million a year when fully implemented in five years.

Another recent achievement was when Andy Martin, chief executive of New Zealand Football announced that "No matter who you are, whatever gender, when you pull on a New Zealand football shirt you're entitled to the same treatment and respect no matter what."

New Zealand Football (NZF) and the New Zealand Professional Footballers' Association (NZPFA) recently announced a new three-year agreement had been reached which grants equality in four key areas for the All Whites and Football Ferns. They are:

- pay parity;
- equal prize money;
- equal rights for image use; and
- parity with travel while representing New Zealand.

Most importantly, this was done not to be trailblazers for other codes, but because it is the right thing to do.

Employment New Zealand clearly states that an employee's pay, conditions, experiences in the workplace and access to jobs at all levels of their workplace should not be affected by their gender.

Those in private, public, and non-profit sectors need to be paying attention and taking action. Some of the actions they could take include:

1. Care enough to address pay equity and take care to ensure that there is equal footing for the men and women in your organisation.
2. Establish a review process to identify whether your organisation's pay and rewards and participation in job types and levels are affected by gender.
3. Assess the impact of gender on the pay and participation of women, analysing quantitative HR and payroll data.
4. Carry out a robust job evaluation – a systematic analytical process to work out the size of each job relative to others, ignoring what sex predominately performs the work.
5. Don't be left to apologise after – get it right at the start.

Because there is a growing significant emphasis on pay equity issues at the local, national and international levels, employers should be encouraged to review their compensation structure and begin the process of conducting remediation, where necessary.

Unfortunately, at the current rate of progress, it is estimated that it will take up to 217 years to close the global economic gender gap. In reality, the lack of pay equity is a systemic problem that needs to be tackled by new and bold methods. Every business in New Zealand can choose to act now.

Paying a woman significantly less for doing the same job as her male counterpart just doesn't make sense.