

12 May 2022

Chief Commissioner Scott  
Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission  
17<sup>th</sup> Floor, 111 St. Georges Tce  
Perth, WA 6000



Dear Chief Commissioner Scott

Re: Submissions for the 2022 WA Minimum Wage

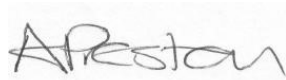
Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to this important State Wage Case. I make this submission as an independent expert. I have a background in labour economics and a particular interest in gender equality.

The State minimum wage provides an important safety net for low paid workers in Western Australia.. These include sectors such as: retail, accommodation and food services, art and recreation services, health and social assistance, and administrative and support services. These sectors are also notable for the relatively high share of females and for the important role they play in the provision of entry level jobs to young people.

Under the Act the Commission is obliged to, amongst other things, ensure that WA has a system of fair wages and employment conditions, that the needs of the low paid are met, that skill development is encouraged and that there is equal remuneration for men and women. All of this is against a background that takes into consideration the capacity of employers to pay and the state of the national and WA economies.

With this in mind I attach a recent brief titled *Prospects for Gender Pay Equity in the WA Public Sector*. The public sector wage policy over recent years has resulted in cut in public sector real wages in WA. Against this backdrop there has been a rise in the gender wage gap in the public sector (as measured by the 'adjusted gender wage gap'). The public sector plays an important leadership role when it comes to wages growth and gender pay equity. Decisions made by the WA IRC are also important for driving wage growth and pay equity. I understand that it is the intention of the State government to continue to practice wage restraint in the public sector in 2022/23, with the likelihood that real wages will further decline. This does not bode well for efforts to close the gender pay gap in the public sector or WA generally. I urge the Commission to give particular consideration to the gender pay gap when deciding on the 2022 WA Minimum Wage.

Yours sincerely



Alison Preston  
Attach *Prospects for Gender Pay Equity in the WA Public Sector*.