



Australian Services Union
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Media Release

for immediate release

10/7/07

Attention: Chief of Staff / News Editor

ASU MEMBERS GIVE EVIDENCE AT HISTORIC PAY EQUITY INQUIRY

Workers from Qantas, Australian Communications Exchange and several others are set to give evidence tomorrow at the QIRC.

The inquiry will hear from former Qantas Check-In Agent, Nicole Flanagan, who will give evidence about how she was forced to choose between her family responsibilities and work, and why she is taking Qantas to the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal along with five other Qantas mums.

Call centre Operator, Helen Ffrench, who relays phone calls for the deaf, will also be giving evidence about how she and her colleagues now can not negotiate a pay rise because they rejected a WorkChoices agreement that would have cut their wages by 22 per cent.

The Inquiry will also receive evidence from three other workers about how their work is still undervalued, 35 years after Equal Pay was 'won' in Australia. Under WorkChoices, the gender pay gap is as wide as it was 30 years ago, one third of all women workers in casual jobs and in the clerical industry, earn about 33 per cent less than men in jobs of comparable value. Research by Dr. David Peetz of Griffith University suggests that in the first six months of the WorkChoices legislation, women's real ordinary time earnings fell by 2 per cent compared to 1.1 per cent for all full-time adult employees.

On Wednesday, the Inquiry will hear from Australian Services Union Branch Secretary, Julie Bignell.

Ms Bignell said: "I will be making a range of suggestions to the Commission that we would like to see considered by the Queensland Government. Because of the Federal grab into State jurisdiction, there are now thousands of workers in Queensland who have lost the protection of State laws. Now more than ever, the State Government needs to consider what it can do to assist these workers who find themselves in a very different world. A world where something called the "Fair Pay" Commission thinks that a \$5 to \$10 a week pay rise in the midst of an economic boom makes sense, and the Federal Government has even taken away the rights of workers to run equal pay cases."

DOORSTOP:

When: Tuesday 10 July

Time: From 10 am.

What: Witnesses to present evidence

Where: Level 13, QIRC, Central Plaza 2, Elizabeth Street

When: Wednesday 11 July and Thursday 12 July

Time: From 10 am.

What: Oral submission from the Australian Services Union, Queensland Council of Unions, Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union, Australian Workers Union and the Queensland Government.

Where: Level 13, QIRC, Central Plaza 2, Elizabeth Street

For comment: Julie Bignell, ASU Branch Secretary 3252 8666 or 0404 820 627

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