

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE — PAY EQUITY UNIT

4286. Hon Linda Savage to the Minister for Commerce

I refer to Budget Paper No. 2, Volume 2, page 459, 8th dot point and the reference to 'pay equity audits', and I ask —

- (1) How many non-Government agencies or businesses have requested from the Department for Commerce (DEC) the pay equity audit tool to conduct a pay equity unit (PEU) of their business/service?
- (2) What is the funding of the PEU, and has it been increased in the 2011–12 Budget?
- (3) How many FTE work in the PEU?
- (4) Other than those funds which relate to salaries, what is the funding for the PEU?
- (5) How does the Department 'promote pay equity audits' as per the second sentence in dot point eight?
- (6) What has the PEU done to specifically address the increase in the gender pay gap in Western Australia (from 24% in May 2010 to 25.2% in November 2010 to 27% in February 2011), in particular insofar as it relates to the public sector agencies?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

- (1) Five private sector organisations have directly requested access to Western Australia's Pay Equity Audit Tool from the Pay Equity Unit. The Tool is available on the Department of Commerce website and it is not known if other organisations have accessed the Tool without contacting the department.
- (2) The funding of the Pay Equity Unit for 2010–11 was \$94,630. The funding for 2011–12 has not been finalised.
- (3) There is 1.4 FTE allocated specifically to the Pay Equity Unit. Other staff members from the Policy Branch assist with pay equity projects when required.
- (4) The 2010–11 budget allocation for the Pay Equity Unit contained \$1000 for professional development of staff.
- (5) To promote and encourage the uptake of voluntary pay equity audits in the Western Australian public sector the Pay Equity Unit provides information and training to public sector agencies. The Pay Equity Unit prepares annual pay equity reports to the 26 largest public sector agencies. In 2011 nine public sector agencies attended training on how to conduct a pay equity audit. Twelve public sector agencies either completed audits or are in the process of completing them. Three universities completed or are in the process of completing audits. The Pay Equity Unit is also currently undertaking the second pay equity audit of the Department of Commerce.
- (6) The Pay Equity Unit continues to raise awareness of the gender pay gap and focus on reducing the gender pay gap for public sector agencies. The gender pay gap has remained relatively stable in the public sector in recent years, and at 17.8% (June 2010) is lower than the overall Western Australian gender pay gap.