



Community & Public Sector Union  
Civil Service Association of WA

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Civil Service Association of WA Inc

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Honourable Simone McGurk MLA  
Minister for Child Protection; Women's Interests;  
Prevention of Family and Domestic Violence; Community Services  
8th Floor, Dumas House  
2 Havelock Street  
WEST PERTH WA 6005

6 March 2018

Dear Minister *Simone*

### Re: Pay Equity for Family Resource Employees

In 2017 the CPSUCSA took steps to better understand a pay equity and underemployment issue in the Department of Child Protection and Family Support (CPFS). The inequity applies to Family Resource Employees (FRE's). These employees facilitate contacts between children in care and their families and complete assessments and reports based on these interactions, according to our membership records 85% of these employees are female.

Historically FRE's have been employed on contracts that provide for two days of work a week, however to provide the service the department requires they regularly work in excess of these contracted hours. The Union made various enquiries with the Department to understand why this underemployment exists and received an official response from them which is provided below for your reference.

*In response to our outstanding action item 3.3 from the FRE JCC 3 August 2017 please note the following:*

1. *CPFS to confirm the rationale for FREs being engaged on a part time basis (generally 2 days per week):*
  - o *Historically the FRE Award only permitted FREs to work 30 hours per fortnight. This has subsequently changed however the custom and practice of part-time appointments for the majority of FREs has continued.*
  - o *It is believed that the initial rationale that supported these part-time appointments was associated with the original 'Homemaker' position type, which was later transitioned to the FRE position type. The majority of these 'Homemaker' positions were filled by female employees and at this time it was perceived that these employees had a preference to undertake part-time hours, primarily due to family responsibilities.*
  - o *This historical practice has also impacted budget allocation for this function, with the majority of FRE positions only being allocated a pro rata salary of 30 hours per fortnight.*

- *Given the dynamic and often reactive nature of this front line function it is considered that the current flexible part-time working arrangements can assist Districts in ensuring the effective deployment of FREs.*
- *It is also recognised that these flexible part-time working arrangements can be in the interest of some FREs, particularly taking into consideration two key demographics (younger employees who may be undertaking formal studies and senior employees who may be seeking to transition to retirement).*

The inequity derived from the rationale as stated above can be seen in the tables below.

Department	
Full time	Part time
78%	22%

\*Figures taken from 2016/2017 annual report

FRE's	
Full time	Part Time
11%	89%

\*Figures taken from members survey

As you can see the rationale for the original part time status was to ensure that those who were employed (traditionally women) had the time to attend to their domestic duties at home, a justification which is now clearly outdated and inappropriate. The Union surveyed its members following the response and identified that 80% of permanent staff would like more guaranteed hours, and of those members surveyed 67% already worked extra hours above what their contract states.

The CPSU/CSA has a strong commitment to eliminating gender based discrimination. We seek your assistance as the Minister for the Department and for Women's interests to correct this historical and ongoing inequity. If you would like to discuss this matter further a small delegation of FRE's would welcome the opportunity to meet with you. For any correspondence relating to this matter please contact Jeff Townend on 9323 3838 or at [Jeff.Townend@cpsucsa.org](mailto:Jeff.Townend@cpsucsa.org).

Yours Sincerely



Toni Walkington  
**Branch Secretary**  
**CPSU/CSA**