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MEDIA RELEASE

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Dance your way to equal pay!

Morning commuters will get more than they bargained for on Equal Pay Day this year with a 'flash mob' dance extravaganza at Footscray railway station.

Women are paid an astonishing 17.2% less than men so, in a shock departure from the traditional black of Melburnian fashion, red-dressed dancers will illustrate how much they are 'in the red' on Thursday 1 September at 8.30am.

On average Victorian women would need to work 63 extra days a year to earn the same as men.

'The average 25 year old man will earn \$2.4 million over the next 40 years compared to \$1.5 million earned by the average woman,' said Women's Health West CEO, Dr Robyn Gregory.

'As a result, women are two and a half times more likely to live in poverty in their old age.'

'A flash mob is a fun and unconventional way to highlight the very serious fact that 'women's work' – particularly in the social and community services sector – has always been undervalued and underpaid, leading to inequality, poor health outcomes, and vulnerability to violence in the home.'

Fair Work Australia has found that community sector workers, 87 per cent of them women, do not receive equal pay and that gender is a significant cause of that pay gap.

'While the Federal government has committed to provide "fair and appropriate" support to fund the gap, it is unclear what this means. It is also unclear where the Victorian government stands on funding equal pay. We do not want to face losing staff or cutting programs because the government has not committed to equitable funding that reflects job worth,' said Dr Gregory.

'Neither do we want Fair Work Australia to award negligible rises out of fear that the state government's lack of commitment to funding equal pay could lead to these outcomes.

'If the government is serious about preventing violence and chronic disease, here is one of the best investments they could make. Funding equal pay will improve the status and health outcomes of all women, reducing their vulnerability to violence and the death, disability, depression and chronic disease that results,' she said.

Film/photo opportunity

8.30am sharp, Thursday 1 September 2011

Footscray railway station, Irving St, Footscray, between the donut stand and the station stairs

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Women's Health West works with individual women, communities and services across the western region of Melbourne. Services include information and referral; health promotion and education; service provider education and development; family violence crisis intervention and support; social support; policy analysis and advocacy; management and governance.