

# Part-time plan to fix pay gap

**MARIA MOSCARITOLA**

ALLOWING men in senior roles to work part-time could be one of many solutions towards closing the entrenched gender pay gap.

The difference in earnings now stands at 17.3 per cent, with women earning an average full-time weekly wage of \$1105.70 in May compared to \$1337.10 for men (an improvement on the almost 18 per cent difference reported by the ABS in February).

The YWCA of Adelaide argues that changing workplace culture to allow men at senior levels to work part-time would make room for more women to progress to higher-paying positions.

"It facilitates the ability for women to move into those senior positions," policy officer Chelsea Lewis said.

"There isn't part-time work in that really senior, high-paying level, so it's one of the causes of the gender pay gap."

Next year, the organisation hopes

to partner with SA's top businesses to raise awareness about the pay disparity and encourage them to trial part-time arrangements at senior levels.

It has set a target to increase the number of men employed part-time from 15 per cent to 25 per cent - made up by senior men taking a voluntary cut in hours - by 2012. Ms Lewis said her organisation had spoken to a number of men who expressed a desire to work part-time, to balance work and home life, but who were unwilling to speak publicly about this for fear of repercussions.

"We need men in senior positions to role model this change ... we need men at all levels of their career to have the courage to request part-time hours."

Business SA chief executive Peter Vaughan could not be reached for comment yesterday. This Saturday, September 4, marks "equal pay day", the day on which women's full-time earnings will match the pay men earned by June 30.