



Gender Pay Gap Statement 2024–25

At Wotton Kearney, we know that gender equality strengthens our culture, supports good leadership, and helps us build a better business for our people and our clients.

Being open about our Gender Pay Gap (GPG) results is an important part of this. Sharing the data each year helps us understand what's driving the numbers, where we're making progress, and where we need to improve.

While we've taken important steps forward, we know there's still more work to do, and we're committed to continuing that work.



Our gender pay gap trends over time (all employees)

Our GPG remains higher than we'd like, but we're encouraged about the downward trend. This positive shift reflects the progress we've made to strengthen our systems, career pathways, and policies. While the improvement is a clear sign that our efforts are working, we recognise that the job is not yet complete and we remain focused on driving further change.

It's also worth noting that our results are not directly comparable with most legal firms because Wotton Kearney includes Partners in our WGEA dataset, while many equity partnership firms don't.



Deep dive into the data - legal team

When we look specifically at our legal team we've maintained a **0% gender pay gap** for equivalent legal roles across early talent lawyers, senior associates, special counsel and partners, since 2023.

Our pay equity reviews consistently show that women and men receive fair and comparable pay when performing the same or equivalent roles.

The gender pay gap is not a measure of equal pay; rather, it reflects the structure of our workforce and the distribution of roles across the organisation. We conduct a comprehensive review of our gender pay gap each year to identify where we need to focus our efforts and drive meaningful progress.



Why we focus on the Median Total Remuneration Gap

In reporting our gender pay gap, the Median Total Remuneration Gap is the primary data point we highlight. This measure gives the most accurate picture of how pay is distributed across our firm and is considered the most reliable way to understand gender pay differences in any organisation¹

Why the median is more meaningful than the average

The median shows the midpoint of all employees' earnings. Half of the workforce earns above it and half earns below it.

This matters because:

The average can be skewed by a small number of very high earners. In professional services and legal firms, a small number of senior leaders, or specialists can significantly raise the average. If men are overrepresented in these roles, the average gender pay gap will appear larger than what most employees experience.

The median represents the "typical" employee. It shows what the middle of each gender group actually earns, making it a truer reflection of the everyday gender pay experience across the business.

Why we focus on Total Remuneration rather than base salary alone

Base salary only captures part of the picture. It excludes key components of remuneration that are common in a legal services environment. Total Remuneration includes:

- base salary
- bonuses and incentives
- superannuation
- allowances
- other financial benefits

Using Total Remuneration is important because:

Senior roles typically attract higher incentive payments, and these roles are still disproportionately held by men across the sector.

Career breaks, part-time work, and different role types can affect access to incentives and other forms of remuneration, influencing overall earnings even when base salaries are equitable.

It captures the full value of what an employee receives, not just their fixed pay.

Total Remuneration therefore provides a more complete and honest representation of earning patterns in the firm.

In short

We use the Median Total Remuneration Gap because it is the most stable, transparent, and meaningful measure of gender pay equity. It cuts through distortions caused by seniority distribution, reflects the typical employee experience, and captures the full financial picture, not just base salary. This helps us focus our efforts where they will have the greatest impact and ensures we are reporting in a way that is genuinely informative for our people and stakeholders.



¹ Summary Indicators of Income and Wealth Distribution | Australian Bureau of Statistics <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/detailed-methodology-information/concepts-sources-methods/survey-income-and-housing-user-guide-australia/2019-20/summary-indicators-income-and-wealth-distribution>



Our Commitment to Action

We're taking deliberate steps to address the underlying causes of our gender pay gap and build a more balanced and supportive workplace.

Fair and transparent pay processes

We conduct ongoing reviews of pay to ensure that all decisions are fair, consistent, and free from bias at each recruitment and promotion event. Our promotion criteria are transparent and well documented, and we recognise that advancement should be assessed not only on demonstrated performance but also on future potential. In reviewing remuneration, we also apply a gender perspective to identify and address inequities, ensuring that salary outcomes genuinely reflect fairness across the workforce.

Better gender balance across all roles

We provide clear pathways into senior roles through mentoring, sponsorship, leadership development, and transparent progression frameworks. By actively identifying and supporting emerging talent, we ensure that future leaders are supported and progressed across all areas of the business. In addition, we continue to enhance our recruitment practices by using fair and structured approaches, such as anonymised applications, consistent interview methods, and diverse panels, to ensure equity and inclusivity from the outset.

Supporting flexibility and different career paths

Flexibility is more than simply working remotely; it recognises that one size does not fit all. We've embraced a "one size fits one" philosophy, ensuring that flexibility is personal to support our people to deliver on their commitments. Our parental leave and transition programs are designed to support continued career growth, while we also prioritise managing workloads fairly across teams so that flexibility benefits everyone.

Using data to guide our decisions

We regularly review gender equality data and share insights with leaders so we can track progress, understand barriers, and focus our efforts where they'll make the biggest difference.

We're committed to building on these foundations and continuing to involve our people in shaping the way forward.

Why does the Gender Pay Gap still exist in society today?

It's reasonable to want a clear explanation of why a gender pay gap exists, particularly where people are confident that individuals are paid fairly for the work they do. The gender pay gap doesn't mean that women and men are paid differently for the same role or level. Equal pay has been a legal requirement in Australia for decades, and remuneration practices are designed to support this.

Instead, results reflect broader structural and societal patterns. The most significant factors influencing the gender pay gap are outlined below.

Representation at senior levels

Senior leadership and partnership roles attract the highest levels of remuneration in the Australian legal market. This concentration at the top end of the pay distribution has a substantial impact on the median and average gender pay gap, even where pay is equitable within comparable roles.

These patterns don't emerge in isolation. They reflect long-standing norms about leadership, availability, and career progression that have historically favoured uninterrupted, full-time career paths, paths that men have been more likely to follow due to how caring and domestic responsibilities are distributed in society.

Flexible work and caring responsibilities

Women continue to take on a greater share of unpaid caring work, including parental responsibilities and elder care. As a result, they're more likely to take parental leave, work part-time, or access flexible arrangements, particularly during key career progression stages.

These choices are shaped by societal expectations rather than individual ambition or capability. However, in professional services firms where senior roles have traditionally been structured around full-time availability, these patterns can affect progression, visibility, and long-term earnings.

While this is starting to shift, driven by more inclusive parental leave policies and more flexible working policies, these recent changes will take a while to have a longer-term impact.

Role type, feminised work, and team structure

Women are disproportionately represented in business services and support roles, work that has historically been "feminised" and undervalued in terms of remuneration. Roles such as administration, childcare, and community services are essential to the functioning of businesses and society, yet their positioning within the labour market reflects systemic undervaluation. Fair Work Award instruments, which establish minimum pay and conditions across industries, embed these disparities by setting different wage floors depending on the sector.

This pattern is consistent across the country and is recognised as a key contributor to organisational gender pay gaps, including within the legal sector. It highlights broader labour-market dynamics in which the value assigned to different types of work is shaped less by their contribution or importance, and more by historical and structural norms about gender and industry.

The drivers of Australia's gender pay gap are well documented in national data. Research from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), the Law Council of Australia, industry bodies, and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) consistently shows that differences in seniority, career pathways, caring responsibilities, access to flexible leadership roles, and the concentration of women in feminised occupations are the primary contributors to pay inequities across the legal profession.

Understanding these drivers enables targeted action where change will have the greatest impact, strengthening progression pathways, supporting flexible career structures into senior roles, and challenging long-standing assumptions about who leads, how work is organised, and how different roles are valued.



Aotearoa (New Zealand)

Wotton Kearney New Zealand remains firmly committed to advancing gender equality and ensuring fair, equitable remuneration for all our people. Over the past year, we've continued to strengthen our monitoring and reporting of gender pay equity through structured and transparent processes.

Our Pay Gap Review

This year, WK New Zealand completed an annual gender pay gap audit, reporting a -1% gap for employed lawyers and -16% for non-legal staff. These results have been submitted to the New Zealand Law Society's Gender Equality Charter, of which WK New Zealand are an active and engaged member.

Annual gender pay gap audit

-1%

employed lawyers

-16%

non-legal staff

Actions taken this year

To support pay equity and minimise bias, WK New Zealand have embedded several key initiatives, including:

- Applying a gender lens to salary review decisions to ensure fairness and address any identified disparities.
- Continuing unconscious bias training for key staff and lawyers.
- Strengthening recruitment processes through blind screening, structured interviews, and diverse interview panels.
- Reviewing equitable briefing practices and expanding the Barristers' database on the intranet.
- Supporting equitable career progression through flexible working arrangements and consistent consideration of staff on parental leave during promotion rounds.

Our ongoing commitment

WK New Zealand continue to build connection with the WK GEN network and are investing in initiatives such as career coaching and menopause training to further support gender equality and inclusion across the firm.

We're proud of the strong representation of women across our team, including 50% women on our Board, 40% women in Partnership, and 48% women in senior leadership roles.

WK New Zealand remains committed to transparency and continuous improvement in addressing gender pay equity, ensuring all our people have equal opportunity to thrive.

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