

# Pay Transparency Matters

## #I'mForEqualPay

## CONVERSATION GUIDE

### Introduction

1. **Start the discussion with people you know, so these conversations shouldn't require a formal introduction. You might just say:**

"Hi [name], how are you today?"

2. **Make sure you check that this is a suitable time to have a chat, for example:**

"Do you have a few minutes to have a chat?" OR

"Is this a good time?"

### Issues & Story

1. **Explain what you're doing:**

"I've been challenged by our union, the FSU, to start a discussion about pay with my colleagues in light of Equal Pay Day, which for finance workers fell 86 days after the end of the financial year, in late September this year (2022).

Did you know that there's a 19% gender pay gap (for full time employees) in the finance industry? It's 14% across all industries for full time employees."

2. **Listen to the response.**

3. **Explain:**

"There's a well-established link between the gender pay gap and pay transparency. When you're not allowed to talk about your pay, there are larger pay gaps.

What do you think about that?"

4. **Listen to the response.**

5. **Respond by telling them what you think about it:**

"I think it's bad. In the last 12 months the FSU has run a campaign that has forced all of our largest employers (the RBA + big 4 banks) to remove pay secrecy requirements so we can start having conversations about pay."



## Agitate

1. Ask some questions to agitate the person you're speaking to about this issue.

Questions you might use include:

"Did you know that employers use pay secrecy to ensure that we don't have access to the same information as our managers do when we are discussing pay increases?"

"Do you think that we should be able to talk to each other about how much we earn and our bonuses if we want to?"

"I know that most people don't like to talk about how much they earn and it's not a conversation that I have regularly, what do you think about the idea of talking freely about pay?"

2. Listen to the response.

## Education

1. Use the opportunity to provide some background on the issue. Some of the things you might include are:

» "Do you know what I mean when I talk about pay transparency?"

It's everything from publication of salaries at one end of the spectrum, to simply allowing workers to talk about their pay with whoever they want without any repercussions."

» "Did you know in Norway, everyone has their income tax return made publicly available so you can find out easily how much people make? That's taking pay transparency VERY seriously."

» "There have been quite a few studies that show that companies with greater transparency have smaller gender pay gaps."

» "Are you interested in finding out more about this topic?"

I can send you some information if you're keen." [Refer to FAQ handout and further reading on the FSU website <https://www.fsunion.org.au/pay-transparency-matters-resources/> for these details]

## Vision and plan to win

1. This is where we set out our vision for how things might improve at work if we had greater pay transparency as well.

2. Begin by asking:

"What do you think it would be like here at work if there wasn't a culture of secrecy around pay?"

3. Listen to the response

4. Explain your vision for a workplace with greater transparency:

"Imagine a workplace where we all know how much everyone is paid, and we have a good understand the things we need to do to do to improve our pay. I'd love to work in a workplace where everyone knows how the company decides who gets how much in bonuses when we all do pretty much the same job.

What do you think? Would you like to work in a place like that?"



## 5. Listen to the response

“Wouldn’t it be good to know that there wasn’t any special treatment and that those who do good work are actually the ones who are more highly paid?

That’s the type of workplace I’d like to have, how about you?”

## 6. Listen to the response

## 7. Explain that we have a plan to win.

“We’ve got a plan to make that happen by working together across our industry. This begins here at our workplace – the plan is that we’ll all start having these conversations with each other.

Now that we’ve eliminated the obligation for pay secrecy we can start to uncover inequities.

When we find an inequity in pay we will work together to force our employer to justify the inequity. If the inequity can’t be justified we’ll use this information to do a pay audit and ensure that pay rates are transparent and fair.

What do you think about that?”

## 8. Listen to the response

## Inoculate

1. Sometimes when you suggest having a conversation about pay your colleagues will object to sharing this information. In the last 12 months the FSU has run a campaign whereby most of the large employers in our industry (the RBA and the big 4 banks) have removed the requirement for workers to keep details about their pay confidential. That means that for a large number of you, it is now possible to disclose details about your pay without breaching confidentiality clauses.

2. If someone is a bit reluctant to discuss their pay details you could ask:

“What do you think will happen if we talk about our pay and someone finds out?”

3. There are some common responses listed below alongside suggestions for how to address their concerns.

### **We get a formal/informal warning**

“I can understand you’re worried about getting a warning. That would worry me as well. We have our CEOs on record that they no longer require workers to keep their pay rates confidential.

If one of our line managers tried this one, we’d just escalate it – the CEO is not going to risk his reputation on backing in a line manager that has defied a public position.”

### **I’m embarrassed to share my pay info because I think I get paid more/less**

“Oh yeah, I totally understand that - I feel the same way actually. The way I’ve overcome this is by understanding that while I have a say in how much I earn through my REM review, I don’t actually have the ability to control how much I earn, or how much others do. The thing I do have control over is whether or not I share my information and use it to make this a better place to work.

If I learnt that I earned less than my colleagues, I can use this information to figure out a strategy to fight for a better increase. If I find out I’m earning more, then I want to work with my colleagues to figure out what I’m doing that’s more effective in getting better pay increases, so we can learn from each other to make sure there is equity in our pay system.

Either way, I've decided that rather than be embarrassed, I'm doing to use this information to make our workplace better. Do you think that might work for you?"

## **I just don't think talking about pay is the right thing to do**

"That's an interesting observation that is completely in line with the culture of our industry. Have you thought about why you don't think it's the right thing to do? If you're not comfortable sharing all your pay information, is there anything you would be prepared to share?"

Would you share your % increase for this year with others?

Or your bonus?

Do you think pay is fair here?

Is there anyone who you think earns more/less that should be earning more/ less?

The only way we're going to change things is by taking small steps.

Would you consider sharing some of your information?

## **Make the ask**

1. **One of the most important parts of any organising conversation is actually asking the person you're talking to, to take part in an action or activity. You can do this by saying:**

"I mentioned at the outset that I'm participating in our union's campaign for pay transparency. I've signed a pledge to talk to 3 of my colleagues about pay. We're doing this across our industry.

Would you be prepared to share something with me as well? I'll start by sharing with you that my last performance increase was X. *[at this stage share some information about your pay, it might be your % increase if it's not guaranteed, or you might choose to share information about your bonus, or your annual salary].*

Is there something you'd be prepared to share with me about your pay?"

2. **Listen to the response and if they give you another objection you can try to respond to it as suggested above. If you are given 3 different reasons and they still won't change their mind, it's probably best to try again another day.**

## **Close and follow up**

1. **At the end of the conversation, acknowledge that the person has taken time out of their day to talk them and remind them of anything they have committed to do during the conversation. For example:**

"Thanks for taking the time to talk to me today, I really appreciate it. Would you like to participate in this campaign as well?"

I can send you a [link to the pledge](#), then all you have to do is choose how you'd like to be involved, it's as simple as pledging to share some information, the same that we've just done.

**All the information you need can be found on the site.** Which email address should I send the information to for you?

That's great. Thanks again."