



Gender Pay Gap Agency Action Plan Pike River Recovery Agency

March 2020

Introduction and context

The Pike River Recovery Agency is a department of the public service, but an atypical one.

The Agency was established on 31 January 2018 with a single purpose - to create and execute a plan for the safe manned re-entry and recovery of the Pike River Mine drift. When this has been done (currently expected to be by about August 2020) and rehabilitation of the site has been completed, ownership and control of the mine will be transferred to the Department of Conservation and the Agency will be disestablished.

The Agency has a number of characteristics that are particularly pertinent to the development and implementation of a relevant and effective gender pay gap action plan:

- The Agency is small, with an expected total staff 'headcount' of 37 people^[1] by the end of March 2020 divided into four main groups:
 - 29 staff with underground mining or related skills, experience and often specific statutory roles (6) and required qualifications (reflecting historical practice and experience, all of these staff are men)
 - 6 non-mining professional, policy and support staff (including communication and stakeholder engagement, finance/payroll processing, family liaison, information management, health and safety administration, support, advisory, and ministerial support roles) – 4 women and 2 men
 - Agency Chief Executive – a man
 - 1 specialist staff member seconded from (and paid by) another agency – a man
- Of the 37 roles, 29 are based at the Pike River Mine, and the remainder based in Greymouth with the exception of the Private Secretary/Senior Advisor role. This role is seconded on a part-time basis to the Minister's office and is based in Wellington
- Because of the specific focus and limited lifespan of the Agency, staff turnover is expected to be low (to date, only three people have/has left the Agency before their contracted period of employment has finished)
- Because of the small size of the Agency the salary paid to the chief executive has a disproportionate impact on the average salary paid to men in the Agency
- Salaries paid to mining staff are 'all up' rates that include compensation for being on call and working shifts at times of up to 10 hours a day for 4 consecutive days. Comparing such salaries with those paid to people working in a non-extended shift environment cannot be a simple 'like for like' exercise

- Salaries actually offered and paid necessarily reflect prevailing sub-market rates for people with different skills and qualifications, and the need to recruit people to limited duration fixed-term roles located in a provincial area
- The last scheduled/expected recruitment to roles in the Agency was carried out in January/February 2020 when seven underground mining roles, a health, safety, risk and assurance position and an electrical technician position were filled
- All but 1 mining staff are employed in unique positions so in these cases it is not possible to make a simple comparison between the salaries of women and men employed in the same role

Management team, gender representation and pay measurement

Of the eight members of the *Agency Management Team* (including the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Family Reference Group and representatives from NZ Police attending all meetings as active listeners) 4 are women and 4 are men.

Across the Agency as a whole the indicative current gender pay gap (based on a simple comparison of the total paid to men and women) is 16%.

Other measured pay gaps within and across the workforce are not reported here because of the recommendation in *Organisational gender pay gaps: measurement and analysis guidelines and Gender pay gap measurement and analysis for Public Service agencies* that 20 men and 20 women are required to undertake gender pay gap analysis.

There is no measurable pay gap within the specialist mining group – all of the people in this group are men.

Existing recruitment practice and experience

The Agency is confident that its recruitment practices have been robust and fair to date, and that gender has not been a factor in the recruitment of staff or the setting of salaries. In particular:

- The competencies required for positions have been set out clearly in job advertisements and job descriptions
 - In more recent time at least one member of all interview panels (including mining roles) has been a woman
 - When recruiting for non-mining roles the Agency has been successful in attracting applications from a good gender mix of candidates. In the case of the health and safety position that was recently recruited for:
 - Three applications from women and seven applications from men were received for the role
 - Candidates shortlisted for interview included two female and two male applicants.
 - Subject to operational and legal considerations which affect mining operations (although the Pike River Mine is not producing coal it is still a registered underground coal mine and is subject to legal requirements accordingly) the Agency is open to flexible working arrangements including remote working.

Action Plan – Closing the Gender Pay Gap

The Agency acknowledges and supports the commitments in the Gender Pay Gap Action Plan to:

- Equal Pay
- Flexible Work by Default
- No Bias or Discrimination in Remuneration Systems and Human Resource Practices
- Gender Balanced Leadership

In support of the action plan the Agency is and will:

- Maintain and apply current practices and standards in relation to any future recruitment that may be required and undertaken
- Ensure that a genuinely gender-neutral approach is taken to:
 - setting starting salaries (by explicitly basing salary offers on the requirements of the role and prevailing market conditions, and – if the appointee is a woman – considering the offers that would have been made had the appointee not been their actual gender)
 - salary reviews (by proceeding as for starting salaries, and considering actual demonstrable performance in the role to date); and
 - applications for leave and flexible working arrangements (subject to relevant and legitimate operational requirements).

For more information please refer to [Dave Gawn](#), Chief Executive or [Michelle Wessing](#), Chief of Staff, Pike River Recovery Agency.