



Gender Pay Gap Agency Action Plan Pike River Recovery Agency

May 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 before the end of the 2020/21 financial year), 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 relevant to the development and implementation of a relevant and effective gender pay gap action plan:

- The Agency is small, with a total staff 'head count' of 40 people at the end of April 2020, divided into four main groups:
 - 30 staff with underground mining or related skills, experience and (often) specific statutory roles and required qualifications – all men
 - 8 non-mining professional, policy and support staff (including communication and stakeholder engagement, family liaison, information management, health and safety administration, support, advisory, ministerial support roles and part time finance role) – 6 women and 2 men
 - The chief executive of the Agency – a man
 - 1 specialist staff member seconded from (and paid by) another agency – a man
- All people are based in Greymouth with the exception of the Private Secretary/Senior Advisor role. This role is seconded to the Minister's office on a part time basis.
- Staff turnover has been very low to date (only two staff members have resigned – both to take up other positions). This is expected to continue until employment with the Agency comes to an end when the re-entry and recovery work is completed and the Agency is wound down and disestablished.
- No further recruitment of staff is scheduled or expected to be required until then.
- 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, in most cases, working shifts of up to 12 hours a day and more than 40 hours per week. 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 non-mining professionals have the ability to work flexibly by default and have done so during the recent periods of COVID-19 Alert Levels Four, Three and Two when normal work in the Greymouth office has not been possible.



- All but 20 Agency staff are employed in unique positions, so in these cases it is not possible to make a comparison between the salaries of women and men employed in the same role.
- The remaining 20 staff (mine workers, interviewers, mechanical and electrical technicians) are required to have previous experience and specific skills in relevant aspects of underground coal mining. Reflecting historic practice in the coal mining industry, all of them are men.

Management team, gender representation and pay measurement

Of the seven members of the Agency *Management Team* (including the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Family Reference Group who attends all meetings as an active observer), four are women and three are men.

Across the Agency as a whole, the gender pay gap as at 30 April 2020 (based on a simple comparison of the total paid to men and women) was 22%.

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
- 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 last non-mining role that was recruited for (a Health, Safety, Risk and Assurance Advisor):
 - 3 applications from women and 7 applications from men were received for the role
 - Candidates shortlisted for interview included a mix of female and male applicants
 - The successful candidate was a woman
- 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 does / 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 been a man)
 - salary reviews (by proceeding as for starting salaries, and considering actual demonstrable performance in the role to date as well as current SSC guidance on the principles and practices to be applied to such reviews); 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.