Breaking the gender bias

International Women's Day (IWD) will be marked on 8 March, with people globally being asked to take up the challenge of breaking the gender bias.

IWD celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women and marks the call to action for accelerating gender parity.

The 2022 theme for IWD is #BreakTheBias, with the call to people to: "Imagine a gender equal world. A world free of bias, stereotypes and discrimination. A world that's diverse, equitable and inclusive. A world where difference is valued and celebrated. Together we can forge women's equality. Collectively we can all #BreakTheBias."

"Celebrate women's achievement. Raise awareness against bias. Take action for equality."

In WA, the gender pay gap is 21 per cent, compared to 14.2 per cent across Australia, while Western Australian women have an average superannuation balance of $290,000, compared to the average of $360,000 for men.

Western Australian women perform about 75 per cent of unpaid work, including caring for children, housework and volunteering.

Bias has been a barrier for women to move ahead, whether deliberate or unconscious. Being aware of it is not enough anymore, action needs to be taken to level the playing field.

Take action by calling out gender bias, discrimination and stereotyping each time you see it.

Show your support for IWD 2022 on social media by striking the Break the Bias pose in a photo and then tagging the image #BreakTheBias when uploading to social media. Just cross your arms in the photo to show solidarity. For examples visit internationalwomensday.com

The website also has selfie cards, social media templates and posters you can put up to promote awareness and conversations around gender parity issues. You can also wear the traditional colours of IWD, purple, green and white.

The WA government has a range of valuable resources on IWD, including a toolkit for people to use. The toolkit contains these suggestions for school events:

- Hold discussions in the classroom relating to the significance of International Women's Day. Guide the discussion by providing some statistics on women's issues. Books and resources to assist are available at the website listed at the bottom.
- Consider hosting a screening of the film Miss Representation (therepresentationproject.org/film/ miss-representation-film) which highlights the role of the media in shaping the lives of young women and girls.
- Teach a lesson on the history of Australia's first female parliamentarian, Edith Cowan. A fact sheet is available at: www.communities.wa.gov.au/IWD
- Invite an inspiring woman from the WA Women's Hall of Fame to talk about her work at a career forum.
- Invite parents and the local community to get involved in an activity during International Women's Day.
- Hold a mock debate relating to diversity or equality in your local community.
- Create whole-class or whole-school woman-themed projects, such as school decorations, art displays, dance demonstrations and assembly performances.
- Incorporate International Women's Day into regular classes, such as art, language or science, and use the results to further promote International Women's Day within the school community.

Access the toolkit by visiting bit.ly/3suhisv

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