

Value of women's work threatened by award modernisation

The value of work performed by Australian women is being threatened by moves currently underway to modernise awards.

Our achievements in gaining recognition for skills that are traditionally performed by women are under threat.

For 100 years women have campaigned for the right to have their skills recognised and rewarded. Women employed in occupations such as nursing, childcare, social welfare or clerical and administrative work were not sufficiently rewarded or valued for the work they did. Training was informal and pay was a lot less than male dominated occupations.

For most of the last century, women were not even paid the same award wages as men when doing the same work or work of equal value.

Despite the introduction of equal pay in the 1970s, women are still struggling to gain the same pay as that of their male colleagues.

In the early 1990s, government reforms meant we had greater ability to fight for, achieve and implement our objectives around recognition of skills and career paths.

Award restructuring and training reform delivered historic shifts in the attitudes to women's work.

The great steps forward for women must not be undermined by proposals to abolish occupational awards and submerge them into industry awards.

This will turn the clock back and make it hard for women to achieve reward for their skills in industries where women have little voice or influence.

We call upon the Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, unions and employers to protect the hard won gains of women workers. We must ensure that their skills, pay and conditions are protected and advanced through the continued existence of occupational awards.

Our equality at work is under threat and we cannot allow this to happen.



A.S.U.
Australian Services Union

