



Australian Government  
Department of Employment and  
Workplace Relations

**Office of Workplace Services - National Office**

GPO Box 9879 CANBERRA ACT 2601

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# Office of Workplace Services Policy Guide

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## INTRODUCTION

This Policy Guide provides broad guidance on the approach of the Office of Workplace Services (OWS) when providing information, advice and educative services to the public and dealing with compliance matters involving federal awards and certified agreements and the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* (the Act).

The Act is based on principles that support and encourage more direct and productive workplace relations between employers and employees. The key role of OWS in this context is to ensure the federal award system operates as a safety net of fair and enforceable minimum wages and conditions of employment. In performing this role, OWS encourages employers and employees to attempt to resolve any differences themselves in the first instance.

The first section of this Guide gives a brief overview of the legislative and policy framework that underpins our work. The second section contains information on our obligations to clients and other issues related to the delivery of our services.

The third, fourth and fifth sections provide guidance on the way we do our work. These sections outline the approach to be followed in doing the main aspects of our work. The Appendix to this Guide lists abbreviations and defines terms and phrases that are commonly used by OWS staff.

It is important to recognise that these guidelines provide only broad policy and limited procedural directions for our work. Individual State and Territory offices should have their own, more detailed procedures and practices, which will vary depending on factors such as the federal/State workplace relations environment and size of its offices.

In the States of Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania, the delivery of OWS advisory and compliance services has been contracted out to State Governments. For the purposes of this Guide, references to OWS should be read to include these contracted State Departments, unless specified otherwise.

These guidelines will be reviewed and updated periodically. Comments, suggested improvements and additional relevant information are always welcome and should be forwarded, through the OWS Manager in your State/Territory, to the Director, OWS - National Office.

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