

# Workplace Change and Women Policy

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1.1 The full benefits of award restructuring will only be achieved for women workers if new career structures including work redesign and opportunities for skill development are included as part of restructured awards.

1.2 Congress recognises the increasing participation of women in the workforce - women are now 31.6% of the full time workforce and 83.7% of the part-time workforce. This is because women workers often have less access to formal training than their male counterparts and many women's jobs lack structured career paths. In addition, women's jobs are predominantly clustered at the lower levels of classification structures within industries.

1.3 Women continue to work in two main types of jobs. The first type has a narrow skill base and Taylorist work design with an emphasis on performance of repetitive tasks at high speed. eg some kinds of process work and machining. The second type is highly skilled across a range of tasks but undervalued because many of the skills are learnt on the job, or are non-technical, interpersonal and organisation skills which are not formally recognised. These include many service and technical jobs, and manufacturing jobs below the skilled trades level. Work redesign must be aimed at improving the quality of women's jobs.

1.4 In developing award classification structures and new forms of work design that are more relevant and appropriate to modern conditions, womens' jobs will need to be analysed and all skills identified to allow for an initial re-valuation of skills before such jobs are classified and career paths are developed.

1.5 Initiatives regarding job redesign and work organisation must take into account the particular needs of women, including family responsibilities and the part-time pattern of many jobs that women occupy.

1.6 Womens' skills must be fully recognised and adequately remunerated. Job redesign and work organisation must also address the issue of pay equity for women by providing clearly defined and accessible career paths, and by breaking down the barriers which deny women workers the opportunity to participate at all levels of the workforce.

1.7 It is important for unions to ensure women workers involvement in any work redesign. This should include involvement in negotiating the objectives and process, actual job change and evaluation mechanisms. This is essential to guarantee that the needs of female workers are met.