



# GENDER EQUITY AND UNIONS

## Advancing the representation and participation of women in unions

1. Congress is committed to ensuring that women have strong and effective union representation in their workplace and in their union structures.
2. Congress commits to the 50-50 representation of women in all elected positions at the ACTU and unions; acknowledging the need to better reflect the representation of women employees in the industry and the female membership of the union. Congress notes that women now comprise half of the paid workforce and more than half of total union membership. The capacity of the union movement to represent and organise women depends on the movement's ability to reflect views and address issues that are particularly relevant to women. In order to achieve this, women members must be able to fully participate in all levels of union decision making processes and structures.
3. Congress commits all unions, TLCs and the ACTU to implement the 2015 Women in Unions Report Recommendations where appropriate, and further encourages all unions to use the Report's recommendations as a basis to review their activities in regard to women, including how they attract, retain and develop women members, delegates, employees, elected officials and leaders.
4. Congress notes the Report recommendations that unions must assist women to continue to grow within the union movement by ensuring their industrial needs are adequately represented in the union's bargaining, campaigning and industrial agendas and by removing the barriers women face in accessing senior and elected roles within their union.
5. Removing these barriers will improve the union's ability to attract the best possible leadership talent and tap into the growth potential of organising women workers.
6. Congress affirms its resolution to:
  - a) Commit to funding and participating in the survey process which is to be conducted every three years in the 12 months before each ACTU Congress;
  - b) Provide for regular reporting of survey results as part of the formal ACTU Congress and ACTU Executive agenda; and
  - c) Acknowledge that the accuracy of the survey results depends on full participation by all unions, and strongly encouraging all unions to continue to complete the survey.
7. The ACTU will coordinate, support and assist unions regarding implementation of the Recommendations.
8. Congress is committed to encouraging all unions, TLCs and the ACTU to apply a gender lens to all union work, including industrial, bargaining, health and safety, and campaigning.

## Women in unions report 2015

9. ACTU Congress notes the recommendations from the Women in Unions report 2015, and will continue to work towards full implementation of these recommendations in 2021-2024

## Women's participation in union structures

10. Congress will encourage women delegates and employees to participate in union structures by:
  - a) Setting appropriate goals, actions, resources and timeframes to increase women's active participation in the union, including the use of quotas and other affirmative action measures;
  - b) Ensuring women members have influence in setting union agendas, priorities and campaign activities and their issues addressed, when developing union industrial priorities and growth campaigns;
  - c) Removing barriers which discourage the participation of women in union activities by taking into consideration the availability of employees and delegates with family/caring responsibilities;
  - d) Identifying and sponsoring women delegates to move into roles including elected positions;
  - e) Encouraging and supporting women employees to take on more senior roles within the union;
  - f) Ensuring women employees are afforded equal opportunities to access career development such as acting in higher duties and board positions;
  - g) Developing and implementing policies for union employees including the equal right for all employees to parental leave, to part time work following parental leave, and to flexible work arrangements.
  - h) Developing and implementing policies and procedures to prevent gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination, including an effective and transparent complaints process. Provide mandatory training for all officials and union employees regarding these union policies and procedures.
  - i) Consider establishing dedicated positions for women on union Committees of Management, Executive, Council, Congress, and other high-level union committees;
  - j) Ensuring there is a union official(s) who has responsibility in the union for women's issues and reports at each union executive;
  - k) Establishing a women's committee and regular women's conference; and
  - l) Monitoring and reporting to the union executive annually on the representation of women at all levels within the union. In addition to this, unions should obtain regular qualitative feedback from women staff, executive members, council members, and delegates about the union culture, issues and challenges they face.

## Peak council leadership and representation of women

11. Ensure peak council leadership and representation of women by:
  - a) Ensuring women member's issues are meaningfully addressed in industrial, growth and campaign priorities, actions and resources set at Union, TLC, ACTU Executive and Congress level;
  - b) Ensuring all unions have a representative on the ACTU Women's Committee and integrating the work of the Committee into other recognised priorities of the ACTU, including in education, industrial and campaigns;

- c) Funding and participating in the ACTU Women in Unions survey which is to be conducted 12 months before each ACTU Congress with the findings to be reported as part of the formal Congress Agenda;
- d) Ensuring that women are equally represented at ACTU Congress t h r o u g h q u o t a s and include consideration of women's issues in each item at Congress;
- e) Continuing to promote and support the Women in Male Dominated Occupations and Industries (WIMDOI) network by encouraging members to attend and actively participate in the biennial conferences;

## Bargaining and industrial agenda

- 12. Ensure women members' issues are included in the bargaining and industrial agenda by:
  - a) Developing bargaining claims that address the concerns of women members
  - b) Bargaining for appropriate facilities and conditions for women workers in male dominated workplaces, and removing barriers which unfairly discourage women's participation;
  - c) Ensuring women representatives are on all bargaining committees; and
  - d) Implementing a bargaining checklist to ensure that women's claims are central and review achievement of women member's bargaining priorities by talking to women members.

## Campaigns

- 13. Congress commits to promoting gender equity and representing the concerns and issues of women members in setting union agendas and industrial, campaign and growth priorities.

## Programs and resources

- 14. Continuing improving and extending the Anna Stewart memorial project by developing a comprehensive, structured curriculum and mentoring program for women union activists.
- 15. Develop materials and resources, publicising union actions supporting women providing role models of active women in the union.
- 16. Ensure union and ACTU training of delegates includes gender equity issues and union policies.