

PICKET LINE



Tom McKeon, Industrial Information Officer

Book reviews

Free publication

Guidelines on women and award restructuring written by the Employment and Skills Formation Council, August 1989, AGPS Canberra.

This publication has two parts. The guidelines set out issues to be addressed when awards are restructured, to avoid creating yet a new set of women's jobs and men's jobs. These issues are communication strategies, wages, skills analysis, classifications, training, work organisation, services and consultative processes.

The second section of the book is made up of 'a number of practical questions which can be used to establish the actual position of women in a given workplace'. The questions help to clarify the impacts of award restructuring on women workers. These questions refer to the same issues identified by the guidelines.

Award restructuring offers an opportunity to revalue women's traditionally undervalued skills. However, this is only possible if those skills are identified for study. This issue is of vital importance for the library and information science profession, where low pay and low status is related to its history as a woman's profession.

I recommend that all those involved in award restructuring negotiations get hold of a copy of these guidelines. Best news of all is that they are available free from the National Arts Industry Training Council, PO Box 1554, Potts Point, NSW 2001.

Award restructuring by J J Macken.

The Federation Press, 1989,
Annandale NSW.

Jim Macken has recently retired after 14 years as a judge in the NSW Industrial Commission. In this book he has detailed the history of the birth of award restructuring. As he says in the preface:

'... such is the speed of change, it will soon be left behind by events. Nevertheless, it seems to me to be important that an attempt be made to record something of the past 2 years in Australian industrial and award-making history.' (p.v)

One of the best features of Macken's book is that it shows where the impetus for change has come from and the reasons why the changes are so dramatic. Many people in the workforce feel that award restructuring has been forced upon them. Macken states that it is not possible 'to insulate either a company or industry against changes which will have their origins either in foreign competition or in those imperatives stemming from changes in the character of society and the workforce in it' (p. 111). Award restructuring is itself a response to change.

This is a quick read of 140 pages that avoids jargon, of which there is much in industrial relations. Chapters include: Wage fixing principle, Multi-skilling and skills audits, Career path formation and broadbanding, Training and TAFE, and Government support facilities.

People employed in library and information science occupations will find the book full of examples quoted from manufacturing industry. Little discussion is given to white-collar or public sector employees. This reflects the history of award restructuring. Macken says:

'Early thoughts that multi-skilling arrangements were confined in their application to skilled operators or tradesmen is not accepted today and the current National Wage Case principles plainly envisage multi-skilling and cross skilling applying to every sector of the workforce.' (p. 60)

I recommend *Award restructuring* as the best single treatment of what may otherwise appear as a host of unrelated changes. I know of no other single publication that has covered these issues as a whole.

AUSTRALIAN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION ASSOCIATION



General Council

President

Lynn Allen, c/- Library and Information Service of WA, Alexander Library Building, Francis Street, Perth, WA 6000, telephone (09) 427 3325, fax (09) 427 3336.

Vice-President

John Levett, PO Box 12, Middleton, Tas 7163, telephone (002) 92 1604.

Past President

Averill M B Edwards, PO Box 381, Manuka, ACT 2603, telephone (06) 262 6041

Chairperson

Board of Education

Fay Nicholson, Department of Library and Information Studies, University of Melbourne Institute of Education, 757 Swanston Street, Carlton, VIC 3053, telephone (03) 341 8111.

Australian Capital Territory

Colin Steele, c/- University Library, Australian National University, GPO Box 4, Canberra ACT 2601, telephone (06) 249 2003.

New South Wales

General Secretary

Tanya Whitmarsh, c/- Ryde Municipal Library, Civic Centre, Devlin Street, Ryde NSW 2112, telephone (02) 808 0575.

Northern Territory

Julii Tyson, c/- Northern Territory Police Force, PO Box 39764, Winnelie NT 0820, telephone (089) 22 3671.

Queensland

Alex Cutts, 10 Belfort Street, Stafford Heights, QLD 4053, telephone (07) 840 4852.

South Australia

Phillipa Middleton, c/- Noarlunga Library, Ramsey Place, Noarlunga Centre, SA 5168, telephone (08) 384 0566.

Tasmania

Christine Goodacre, PO Box 764, Sandy Bay, TAS 7005, telephone (002) 20 2351.

Victoria

General Treasurer

Bruce Davidson, c/- Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Victoria, Spring Street, Melbourne, VIC 3002, telephone (03) 651 8630.

Western Australia

Roslyn Membrey, c/- Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Western Australia, Perth, WA 6000, telephone (09) 222 7256.