

Picket Line



Susan Ainsworth
Industrial Officer

...the biggest concern is future career paths and opportunities...

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YOU COULD be forgiven for thinking award restructuring was over. Certainly it is not making the headlines it used to. For most it has been a long and drawn-out process which some would say has lost direction. But it is hard to generalise. For a start organisations and workplaces are at different stages in the process. Information about the progress of award restructuring is also surprisingly hard to come by. Recently a major report commissioned for the National Board of Employment, Education and Training criticised the lack of national coordination in the award restructuring process. Some of the industrial parties do have a 'big picture' but they are rarely the same one. Unfortunately, individual workplaces and organisations are often left to come to terms with translating to a new award in isolation

A potentially dangerous situation

This is potentially a dangerous situation because without access to information about how other organisations of a similar kind are proceeding, inequities could be established that may be difficult to remove later on. From my experience immediate monetary concerns are rarely the main issue for staff. In general employers have made sure that employees will not be paid less under a restructured award. The enquiries I have recently received from public librarians in Victoria, who are in the process of translating to their new award, suggest that the biggest concern is future career paths and opportunities, both within their own library and outside. Specifically they were seeking information about what was occurring in other organisations in order to appeal sometimes systematic downgrading of positions in the reclassification process. The outcome of these appeals is uncertain. I am mentioning this situation in particular to illustrate the fact that ultimately, it is in everyone's interests to circulate information and give other people in your occupational group the benefit of your knowledge and experience. And that brings me to an ad break...

ELISS and Vic Branch of ALIA have organised a joint meeting on *Award Restructuring—How does it affect Library Staff?* It will be held on 7 May at 5.30 pm in Conference Room 1, 5th Floor, Bureau of Meteorology, 150 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. The cost is \$6 and interested people can RSVP to Micheline at Library Focus on (03) 429 5177. I am attending and speaking and there will also be a panel.

Publications

Members who deal with legislation and industrial relations may be interested to know that there is a new edition of the Australian Industrial Relations Act 1988 which is consolidated to April 1991. This second edition includes amendments which have dealt with the registration, size, coverage and amalgamation of organisations (trade unions) and the enhanced enforcement of awards.

I have also received two new publications from the ACTU on the award provision for parental leave and how the new superannuation legislation will affect women.

Postscript

I plan to write a *Picket Line* in every other issue of *inCite*. Look forward to the next topic—*Enterprise Bargaining*.

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