

## Why we still need the Women's Program



Leeanda Smith  
Women's Coordinator  
**March 23, 2022**

Our Women's Program promotes women members' activism within Federation and across the broader union movement to ensure vigilance and ongoing advocacy in the area of women's equality.

While there are things that have improved in our workplaces and society, there are still many that have not. The structure of our workplaces still favours full-time employees who can attend out-of-hours meetings and events. Organisational barriers remain for those trying to access permanent employment, flexible work arrangements, those who work part time or have a break in service for caring purposes. This in turn has an impact on lifetime financial security and potential earnings.



Research is emerging that shows even though there are fewer men in teaching, they are more likely to obtain promotions positions earlier in their careers and progress to subsequent promotions positions faster. We also know that women who work part time have more difficulty accessing opportunities to relieve in higher positions and it takes longer for them to obtain promotions positions.

Our program supports women members (who make up 70 per cent of our membership) to participate, and demonstrate their leadership capacity, not just in Federation's forums and structures but in workplaces and throughout the community.

Our program ensures women's voices and perspectives are part of decision-making processes. It provides opportunities for women to develop the skills and confidence to be representatives, to deal with issues in their workplace and to actively engage in our campaigns.

Our union holds an annual Women's Conference, conducts Trade Union Training specifically for women, runs the Anna Stewart Program and supports the Rosemary Richards Scholarship. We continue to build our collection of feminist resources in the Federation Library and specific information about work entitlements can be found under the "Women in Education" tab on Federation's news page.

Inequity for women in male-dominated industries is obvious but for women in education, problems are often hidden in plain view. It is so important for us to not only maintain but also evaluate and add to the program, to examine ways to dismantle the barriers that prevent equity at all levels, and to develop pathways for greater diversity and representation in decision-making forums.