

ANNA STEWART PROGRAM



NSW Teachers Federation

Anna's re-evaluation of the rights of female labour led to a fundamental reappraisal of women's issues throughout the union movement

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Who was Anna Stewart?

Anna Stewart was an active Victorian union official and long-time campaigner for women's rights. When Anna entered the industrial arena, women made up one third of the paid workforce, usually in unskilled or semi-skilled positions. They were poorly paid, lacked job security and satisfaction and rarely had access to promotional opportunities.

She worked tirelessly to devise ways to involve women directly in deciding the principles and priorities to put to unions and government that would help them achieve real equality of status and opportunity. Working in the union movement for less than a decade, Anna developed a radical re-evaluation of the rights of female labour. This led to a fundamental reappraisal of women's issues throughout the union movement.

Anna worked as both a research and industrial officer for a number of unions from 1974, until she died tragically in 1983 at the age of 35. She campaigned during the 1970s to ensure that both the union movement and employers began to recognise the needs of working women. She focused on areas such as maternity leave and childcare facilities and headed up a campaign to draw attention to sexual harassment as a form of exploitation of women.

Anna Stewart Memorial Project

After Anna's death, a number of her trade union friends and colleagues met to determine the most appropriate means by which her work and life could be remembered. This was felt to be particularly appropriate in light of statistics that showed that, despite the large numbers of women joining trade unions, women were still under-represented in decision-making structures.

In 1986, the Anna Stewart Program was conceived and established as an annual on-the-job training program for women unionists, to provide a unique level of awareness of the way unions can work in our society. This program is an affirmative action aimed at developing the skills, knowledge and confidence of women members and empowering them to be actively involved in Federation in their workplace, local association, or state level.

The Women's Committee and Anna Stewart Program consists of six female Federation members who are elected each year at February Council. This committee is responsible for the selection of successful applicants. The Department of Education and Communities supports the Anna Stewart Program.

All financial women members of Federation are eligible to nominate

How does Federation's Anna Stewart Program work?

There are two variations on the Anna Stewart Program. They are:

1. **The 2-week program** — There are up to 16 positions available during term 2 and term 3 (usually run around Federation Councils).
2. **The full-term program** — One position available during term 4. The Anna Stewart Temporary Officer is required to undertake a 'project' set by the Women's Committee and Anna Stewart Program each year.

Who is eligible?

All financial women members of Federation are eligible to nominate.

How do you nominate?

Application forms are available:

- by phone from Women's Coordinator Anna Uren on (02) 9217 2100 or 1300 654 396. You will need to indicate if you are interested in either a 2-week position or term position
- on Federation's website
- from your Association President or Secretary

The application form requires you to indicate the Federation experience you have had (for example, positions held, attendance at Federation meetings, conferences, trade union training or activity in campaigns).

The nomination form must be signed by either the President or Secretary of your Association.

The 2-week position also requires a short statement outlining what you hope to achieve by being involved in the program. The selection criteria for the term position is a written submission of no more than 500 words outlining why you wish to take up the position and your areas of interest.

Will you be paid?

Yes. If you are permanent, permanent part-time or working in a temporary position – for example, one term – then the Department of Education and Communities or TAFE Institute will continue to pay you and Federation will pay the cost of casual relief.

If you are working as a day-to-day school casual teacher or TAFE part-time casual teacher, then Federation will pay for any work you were booked to do but were unable to take up due to your participation in the program.

For other employers, such as Corrective Services or Board of Studies, similar arrangements will be made.

Is accommodation provided?

Do not let your location in relation to Sydney hinder your decision to nominate for the Anna Stewart Program. Country members are encouraged to nominate and if selected will be provided with accommodation within easy commute to Teachers Federation House.

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You will develop an understanding of
the processes and practices in its
dealings with the education
department

Hours of duty?

Anna Stewart participants could be required to attend meetings or events outside of administration hours and there is an expectation that participants attend Council to maximise their learning experience.

Other issues such as childcare should be discussed with the Women's Coordinator.

What do Anna Stewart Temporary Officers do?

As an Anna Stewart Temporary Officer, you will be given the opportunity to work with a range of Federation Officers to develop an understanding of the processes and practices in its dealings with the Department of Education and Communities, and observe Federation campaigns.

You will have the opportunity to:

- attend meetings with the Department of Education and Communities (and other organisations)
- attend school and association meetings
- observe cases in the Industrial Relations Commission
- prepare journal articles and research issues of concern to women
- attend other unions meetings – such as Unions NSW
- work alongside substantive Federation Officers.

So if you think this is the program for you, please consider applying for one of the available positions.