



HOW UNIONS WORK: ROLE OF UNIONS

What Do Unions Do?

- * Assist in the organisation of workplaces to get a better deal for workers
- * Ensure that members know their entitlements
- * Provide representation when negotiating an award, enterprise agreement or contract
- * Represent members in any counseling or disciplinary matters before their employer - including unfair dismissals
- * Assist with specialist industrial advice and legal representation
- * Ensure members are being paid correctly by checking employer time and wage records
- * Arrange workplace inspections in relation to occupation, health and safety (OH&S) matters
- * Champion social issues, national and international. e.g. Refugees, Peace Movement, rights of disadvantaged people
- * Act as a pressure group at State and Federal Government level on behalf of workers e.g. through ACTU or the Labor Council.

ROLE OF UNION ORGANISER/OFFICIAL

- * Oversees operation of union at the workplace – election of delegates/shop stewards
- * Assists delegates in workplace negotiations
- * Attends meetings of members
- * Coordinates industrial campaigns
- * Appears before industrial relations tribunals

ROLE OF UNION/DELEGATE

- * recruits new members
- * represents members on local issues/grievances or workplace/OHS committees
- * distributes union materials
- * organises meetings of union members at workplace
- * attends central union meetings

WHAT UNIONS HAVE ACHIEVED: THE UNION SCORECARD

- * The right of workers to form a union which elects its own independent representatives
- * Awards to ensure that employers observe minimum wages and working conditions
- * Equal pay
- * Long service leave
- * Pay loading for evenings, nights and weekends
- * Paid public holidays
- * Periodic wage increases
- * Maternity/adoption/parental leave
- * Annual leave and leave loading
- * Protective clothing and equipment provided by the employer
- * Occupational health and safety laws
- * Compensation for injury
- * Superannuation
- * The right to be given notice and to be consulted about changes at work (e.g. new technology, planned retrenchments, new working arrangements)
- * Personal Carers leave