

Sara Charlesworth: The Sex Discrimination Act: Advancing gender equality and decent work?

The paper takes the ILO's framing of gender equality as 'at the heart of decent work' as its starting point. The concept of decent or quality work is a broad one that recognises both the nature and content of jobs and the relationship between paid and unpaid work as critical for the realisation of gender equality. The paper analyses the contribution of the SDA in advancing decent work in the Australian context and argues that a major constraint on its influence has been its effective separation from industrial relations (IR) law. This has made it difficult to conceive of sex discrimination as a mainstream IR issue and means the gender equality impact of IR regulation, reflected in classification structures, bargaining provisions and working time arrangements, remains invisible.