

Work justice – what's that?

- Work justice is about placing human relationships and human needs at the centre of industrial relations and welfare policies.
- Just working conditions include decent, fair and sustainable wages and conditions, job security and predictability of hours.
- A socially responsible industrial relations system recognises the importance of shared leisure time, reasonably priced and readily available childcare and paid leave for strong families and healthy, vibrant communities.

Why is this an issue in 2007?

- The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) recently released figures showing that Australians are working increasingly longer hours, to the detriment of their families and communities.
- Job security is an issue for a growing proportion of casual workers without leave entitlements, as well as for employees who no longer have the right to appeal an unfair dismissal.
- Changes to Federal legislation have allowed employers to undercut minimum award conditions in certain circumstances. For working people with reduced bargaining power, such as those with limited skills and job mobility, casuals and unemployed workers, this is a difficult prospect.

Ask your candidates

- What are your views on paid parental leave and childcare availability?
- Do you support the role of unions in assisting workers to collectively bargain?
- How would you use your position as a Member of Parliament to ensure that working people have better job security and work reasonable hours?
- What policies does your party have in place for supporting working families to have better quality family and community engagement?

FAST FACTS

Around one third of all female employees are casual workers and as such have no entitlement to unpaid maternity leave or paid sick, carer's or holiday leave. (ABS, Nov 2006)

According to the ABS, the average non-managerial employee on an AWA individual agreement earns less than an employee on a registered collective agreement yet recent legislation has made it harder for employees to bargain collectively as part of a trade union.

FairWear estimates that there are over 300,000 clothing industry outworkers in Australia many of whom are women and their children, and who work for less than \$3 per hour.

In 2006, an International Labour Organisation Committee of Experts stated that **Australia's new laws breached two important ILO conventions** on freedom of association and collective bargaining.

“Work is a fundamental aspect of human life. It is one of the most significant ways that people find meaning in their lives and the means by which they live out their responsibility to contribute to the common good. Along with that responsibility, however, comes the right to be treated with dignity and respect in that work.”

Rev. Elenie Poulos, speech to Now We The People conference, 2005

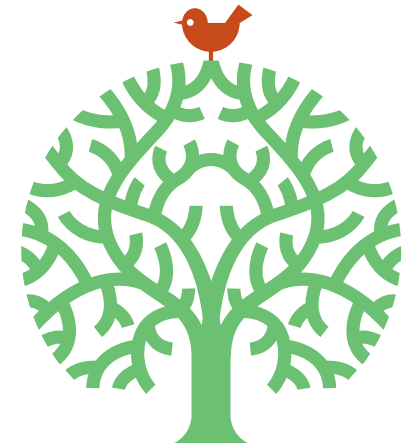


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Work Justice



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