

International unions call for new globalisation to respect rights to decent work and full employment

Global economic turmoil has made the right to decent work and full employment more essential than ever, Australian unions say.

For workers around the world, organising and collective bargaining rights are crucial to giving workers real influence over their lives for job security and a fair share of wealth, ACTU President Sharan Burrow said on the inaugural World Day for Decent Work.

The global call to action has been organised by the world trade union movement and could not be more timely given the economic uncertainty created by the financial crisis emanating from Wall Street, said Ms Burrow, who is also President of the International Trade Union Confederation.

“We are living in an increasingly globalised economy, where decisions made on Wall Street have a palpable impact on workers throughout the world,” Ms Burrow said.

“As the world economy evolves and becomes interlinked, we need to ensure that the principles of decent work and full employment are protected.

“Today is about standing up for decent work, for job security, for a fair globalisation, against poverty and in the interests of much greater equity and justice.

“We have seen the global economy go off the rails because of corporate investor greed.

“Real wages fell or stagnated while profit shares have reached record levels.

“We have an opportunity now to relaunch globalisation along a path of sustainable and just development with fairness, equity and rights at work at the centre of public policy so globalisation works for all, not just a privileged few.”

In Australia, the focus for unions is the right to collective bargaining laws that can deliver fair wages and conditions for working Australians.

In addition to a safety net, unfair dismissal rights and dispute settlement procedures, it is collective bargaining that will deliver not just wage justice but a more equitable society.

“We will see laws that will return rights at work to working Australians back in the Parliament in the next few weeks,” Ms Burrow said.

“This is the culmination of a determined struggle over three years by working Australians to have rights restored and hand on a legacy of decent work to their children and their grandchildren.”

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