

RACISM RESOLUTION ACTU CONGRESS 1997

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There is a new debate and new developments around racism in Australia which requires the ACTU Congress to restate its position. These include the emergence of Pauline Hanson and her so-called One Nation Party with her attack on 'Asians', immigration and Indigenous policies; the continuing and sustained attack on Indigenous leaders and their institutions by the Federal Government; and probably for the first time in the past two or three decades, a refusal by the Government of the day to take a clear and unequivocal stand against racism.

2 PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Congress rejects all forms of racism.
- 2.2 A stand against racism is taken as a matter of fundamental principle. All people are created equal and any suggestion that the colour of one's skin, language, religious beliefs or cultural values should result in second class citizenship, must be totally rejected.
- 2.3 Australia is a multicultural country. The ACTU believes Australians will continue to welcome people without regard for race, colour or religion.
- 2.4 The ACTU Congress strongly believes that cultural diversity does contribute to Australia's national character and enriches the culture of our society.

3 ACTION PROPOSED

- 3.1 The ACTU and affiliates will join with Indigenous people in defence of Human Rights, Native Title, the Racial Discrimination Act and the promotion of a just response to the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families. This will continue to be a priority with action organised around lobbying, information campaigns within unions, collaboration with the National Indigenous Working Group (NIWG) as well as other community organisations.
- 3.2 We will have continued involvement with the reconciliation process including the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation and cooperation with other community organisations.
- 3.3 The ACTU and affiliate unions will seek to join with a range of like-minded community groups to mount an anti-racism campaign amongst union members,

workplaces and the general community. The campaign, to be launched on the UN International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March, 1998), will focus on initiatives such as:

- 1] media attention to the anti racism campaign;
- 2] development and preparation of resource material for dissemination union communications with their members;
- 3] participation in community events.

3.4 Affiliates, in developing effective anti racism programs with their members, will:

- 1] educate members about the history of racism and its negative impact on many Australians;
- 2] inform their members of the principles underlying anti discrimination and equal opportunity legislation;
- 3] advise their members of how to deal with discriminatory behaviour in the workplace;
- 4] assist their members to take action under the provisions of legislation;
- 5] educate shop stewards, organisers and officials;
- 6] include anti discrimination clauses in enterprise bargaining negotiations and ensure the effectiveness of grievance handling processes, including unions assisting members with their complaints.
- 7] be encouraged to develop reconciliation programs for their members.

3.5 The ACTU and State Trades and Labour Councils to maximise the co-ordination and oversighting of these activities through whatever means are appropriate including if necessary the formation of specific committees.

3.6 International union delegations from Australia and international visitors to Australia will be appraised of the position which Australian unions are taking towards combating racism in this country.

3.7 The ACTU will work with the other ILO partners and community organisations in developing implementation strategies for the National Policy on Equality of Opportunity and Treatment in Employment and Occupation.

3.8 The ACTU will continue to develop an area of its Internet web site on race, immigration and Indigenous issues.