

*TEXTILE, CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR
(TCF)
RESOLUTION
ACTU CONGRESS 1997*

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 100,000 jobs or approximately 10% of Australia's manufacturing industry employees are TCF workers.
- 1.2 On the whole these workers are migrant women from non-English backgrounds.
- 1.3 Productivity in these industries is undoubted as exports have been growing by 14% per year. Some of this success has to be attributed to the 1986 Industry Plan.
- 1.4 Reducing tariffs to 5% by the year 2008 would result in a 1.5% fall in the nation's GDP, the loss of 90,000 jobs and an increase in the current account deficit of \$1 billion dollars at 1990 prices.
- 1.5 The Industry Commission Report is flawed in that the modelling is based on full employment and a higher marginal tax rate (39%). Thus while not directly addressing the issue, the model suggests that tax increases will offset revenue losses from tariff reductions (an assumption that seems to go against Government policy).
- 1.6 The TCF industries with a well developed industry plan like that being suggested by the TCFUA would ensure the industries' future and the maintenance of 100,000 Australian manufacturing jobs.

2 INDUSTRY PLAN

- 2.1 The ACTU calls upon the Federal Government to implement a TCF Industry Plan that includes:
 - 1] The current TCF Plan remaining in force until the year 2000
 - 2] Realistic tariff rates which in our opinion requires a freeze from 2000 to 2005
 - 3] Export facilitation and support for investment in new technologies and skills
 - 4] Changes in work and management culture and targeted labour adjustment measures

- 5] The establishment of a new 'Textile & Clothing Advocate' based on the US model, which would become a co-ordinating focus for advice, information, marketing and assistance programs with properly resourced offices and infrastructure in regional areas.
- 6] Assistance programs that are conditional upon the employers' performance, commitment to R & D, ensuring workforce levels and meeting export markets and export levels.
- 7] The establishment of a new technology fund
- 8] Recognition of the need to ensure that the Import Credit Scheme is not removed without putting in place a program of equivalent value, consistent with our international obligations
- 9] The introduction of specific labour adjustment measures which will support TCF workers especially in regional areas
- 10] The legislating of regulations and codes in regard to homeworkers in a not dissimilar way to the US "Stop Sweatshops Act", and
- 11] A vigorous attack on unfair trade within our region and beyond especially in regard to child and prison labour and breach of international labour and human rights conventions.

2.2 Further, we are suggesting a review of this Plan in 2004. This review should involve wide consultation with the Union and Industry. Such a review should concentrate on the position of the industry within the region and should not vary the above plan without giving consideration to what our APEC trading partners are doing in regards to tariffs especially those partners within our region.

3 STOP TARIFF REDUCTIONS

3.1 The ACTU rejects any proposal that involves a tariff reduction after the year 2000 and involves the further loss of jobs in the TCF Industries. Further the ACTU supports and endorses the TCFUA's Alternative Report and urges the Federal Government to adopt it as the TCF Industry Plan.