

YOUNG PEOPLE AND UNIONS RESOLUTION ACTU CONGRESS 1997

1 UNION ACTION

- 1.1 Unions should raise their public visibility by acting on and running campaigns on all issues relevant to young people including (but not limited to): ensuring quality vocational education and training, promoting fair wages, opposing the exclusion of new starters from unfair dismissal laws promoting occupational health and safety, opposing all harassment and discrimination and raising employment levels. The utilisation of one or more of a number of young and effective spokespeople on these issues would be important.

2 SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES, TAFES

- 2.1 Unions should seek to educate young people in schools, TAFE colleges and universities about the role of unions and employment issues prior to these students entering industry. It is important that younger officials and union representatives be included in a program of visits to educational institutions to ensure that the stereotyping of unions is overcome. Information kits, curriculum material and material on the Internet should be developed to deliver a positive message regarding unions to young people. The ACTU should coordinate the development of curriculum on unions for use in schools together with the Education Unions, Community Groups and State and Territory TLCs.

3 TRAINING

- 3.1 The ACTU and unions need to maintain an active involvement in the access, content and delivery issues with comprehensive vocational training including the maintenance of a publicly funded TAFE system. The growth of traineeships under the leadership of NETTFORCE has been a significant success in delivering additional training opportunities.
- 3.2 The ACTU and unions must maintain their involvement in the forums which promote traineeships to young people and employers.
- 3.3 Whilst the ACTU supports the introduction of new apprenticeships especially where none previously existed we oppose the use the AWAs as the employment contract and the deregulation by State governments of apprenticeships and the removal of declared vocations.
- 3.4 Unions should also pursue claims for training related expenses to be reimbursed for trainees.

4 UNION STRUCTURES

- 4.1 All unions should encourage young people to actively participate in union decision making. Where appropriate youth committees, young people on State and national Councils and campaigns around issues of concern to young people need to be facilitated and formed where they don't exist.

5 COMMUNICATIONS

- 5.1 Young people have different needs and preferences in terms of communications from the union. Electronic communication is now familiar to many young people on the internet and greater attention needs to be paid to this medium. Printed communication needs to have a modern approach with colour and layout and the use of young role models and consideration should also be given to greater use of radio programs that have a young audience.

6 WAGES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

- 6.1 Unions should recognise that the abolition of junior rates of pay is a mainstream industrial activity of the trade union movement.
- 6.2 The ACTU in conjunction with affiliates should initiate a test case through the AIRC before the review due by June 1999 on the elimination of age based rates and their conversion to a competency based system.
- 6.3 Furthermore all relevant unions should seek to in first instance to eliminate junior rate structures in their collective bargaining agreements and seek their removal from their respective awards.

7 EMPLOYMENT

- 7.1 The ACTU should initiate a Young Persons Coalition of representative groups and individuals to campaign to highlight the tragic level of youth unemployment and the resulting alienation of young unemployed people. The campaign should be run over the first six months of 1998 to focus the attention of the community on youth unemployment levels and the need for a positive action program to generate more full-time jobs.
- 7.2 Unions should include claims for additional apprenticeships and traineeships positions in their collective bargaining agreements.
- 7.3 The ACTU and unions should lobby State, Federal and Local governments to adopt policies whereby they require all successful tenderers for government contracts to employ at least one trainee or apprentice for every 10 workers with a minimum of one trainee or apprentice for employers with less than ten employees.

8 RESEARCH

- 8.1 That a review of the research literature be undertaken to prepare an evaluation of the evidence regarding the attitudes of young people toward unions. If necessary additional research be undertaken.

9 CAMPAIGN RESOURCES

9.1 The ACTU and its affiliates recognise that issues affecting young people are an important priority for the trade union movement. In light of this the ACTU commits to:

- 1] the allocation of adequate resources including an officer/official to be the co-ordinator on industrial issues and campaigns affecting young people incorporating the work of the ACTU Youth Committee.
- 2] The consideration of specific funding requests from affiliates and the ACTU Youth Committee campaigns specifically targeting young people on mainstream industrial issues such as equal pay, jobs and occupational, health and safety.