

Organising Young Workers

1. Young people need unions; they are more at risk of injury in the workplace, more susceptible of being victims of workplace bullying and harassment and find it more difficult to exercise their democratic and workplace rights.
2. Today's young people are the future of and key to the success of the union movement. It is vital that we adopt a whole of movement approach to ensure that we actively contact, represent and educate young workers.

Representing Young Workers

3. Unions have a responsibility to organise the next generation of workers. Growth, organising and education are vital strategies in the fight to build a better future for the next generation of Australian workers.
4. Affiliates are encouraged to:
 - a) Map areas of coverage to identify young workers and their needs;
 - b) Explore a variety of growth and organising strategies to engage young workers;
 - c) Develop an organising plan targeted at meeting the needs and growing the participation of young workers;
 - d) Investigate offering fee structures based on hours worked, classification of work or a "no work means no fee" policy to enable young workers to take out union membership; and
 - e) Appoint a Youth Contact Officer in each branch who is responsible for encouraging activism amongst young members.
5. A call for support or advice from a young person who is not a member of a union can be the only contact they experience with a union. Affiliates can make this a positive experience by expressing a sympathetic view towards young workers joining a union when they have an existing issue.
6. Congress calls on affiliates to investigate alternative ways of supporting young non-members should be investigated by affiliates to ensure these workers have their workplace rights protected and a positive experience of trade unionism that encourages them to become a member, such as:

- a) The Young Workers' Legal Service in South Australia model, offering legal support and advice;
 - b) Offering backdated membership to young workers with an issue, depending on the nature and severity of the issue; and
 - c) Having policies around allowing young workers to join when they call for support if they are in a non-unionised workplace and have not previously been asked to join a union.
7. Young workers often frequently change jobs and industries. Affiliates are encouraged to develop specific strategies to encourage the retention of young workers within the union movement.
8. Affiliates will consider:
- a) Focus on recruiting young workers into existing committee, delegate or other industrial structures to promote renewal and retention; and
 - b) Develop ways to keep young people as members as they move between jobs or industries. For example the Unions WA Churn Project.

Communication

9. Effective communication is essential for growth and organising strategies to ensure that young people to engage with the union movement. Unions should utilise innovative and appropriate tools to better communicate with young members and potential members.
10. Affiliates are encouraged to discuss their communication methods and messaging with young members and workers to better tailor their communication strategies.
11. The ACTU and affiliates will:
- a) Consider young workers in communication strategies to ensure that young people can relate to their message;
 - b) Place new media and technology at the centre of union communication strategies; and
 - c) Ensure the advice for young workers is featured and included in union publications and online content.

Education

12. Unions have a fundamental role in the education of young people, not only in the workplace, but in the wider community. This education should focus on the essential role that unions play in both the workplace and in society, the importance of workplace rights, and should educate young people on how collective action can lead to positive change and better lives.

13. The ACTU and affiliates will:

- a) Consider developing and undertaking specific training, conferences and events for young delegates, activists and members;
- b) Ensure the union movement maintains a presence in formal education settings working with teachers and education representatives to ensure that students are educated on the role and importance of unions; and
- c) Establish a presence outside the workplace. Unions should be active at; universities, youth community organisations, National Youth Week and other youth focused events.

14. The ACTU will ensure that appropriate materials are made available to Labour Councils and Unions which educate young people on their industrial rights, safety and positively promote the roles unions play.

Leadership Development

15. Young unionists of today are union leaders of tomorrow. Unions need to engage in leadership development of our young union officials and offer clear pathways for young people working in the movement. This may involve:

- a) Resourcing and promotion of Union Summer, Organising Works and similar programs;
- b) Offering the opportunity for young unionists to work in a relief or acting position as a critical way to provide opportunities for skills development and work experience;
- c) Putting in place a mentoring system aimed at young officials; and
- d) Providing a range of other opportunities for career development, training and mentoring within the movement.

16. Affiliates are encouraged to support youth in union structures by:

- a) Establishing youth committees throughout their organisations;
- b) Involving young members and officials within decision-making bodies, especially young people based in non-metropolitan areas;
- c) Creating and resourcing networks of young delegates, activists and members; and
- d) Entrenching these in the rules of their organisations. For example introducing affirmative action structures for young people or mandating youth representative positions.

Occupational Health and Safety

17. Unions note that young workers are over represented in statistics for workplace injuries. According to Worksafe Victoria workers aged between 15 and 24 are more likely to experience a workplace injury than workers in any other age group in Victoria.
18. SafeWork SA also reports that young people are more likely to be injured at work and are often unfamiliar with workplace hazards, safety procedures and their rights.
19. Congress acknowledges that young workers are a specific and often more vulnerable group in the workplace and this may create the circumstance where young workers do not feel comfortable speaking out or seeking compensation if injured.
20. Young workers, like all workers, are entitled to be treated fairly at work, have a workplace that is safe and free from discrimination and bullying. Young workers are also entitled to adequate information and training from their employer about safe work practices and to expect adequate enforcement of legislation by regulators.
21. Congress calls for all affiliates to encourage and promote:
 - a) Regulators enforcing the current laws to ensure employers are meeting their obligations to workers, especially young workers for education and training and providing a safe, hazard free workplace;
 - b) Regulators providing information targeted at young workers, regarding safety in the workplace to reduce the incidence of injuries among young workers and make young workers aware of their rights to raise concerns about workplace health and safety and to claim compensation for work related injuries;
 - c) The education of young workers about health and safety issues in their own policies and encourage the involvement of young workers in their own health and safety committees and programs;
 - d) The investigation into the adequacy of the current health and safety legislation and its enforcement with particular focus on bullying and harassment and protecting workers from bullying and harassment and associated injuries; and
 - e) Safework Australia adopting the model code of practice on bullying and harassment.

Campaigning for Better Work

22. It is important that unions continue to demonstrate their positive influence on the working lives of young people. The ACTU and affiliates will continue to advocate improvements in working conditions for young workers and develop opportunities for young people to build capacity to campaign around these issues. This will be centred on youth related issues such as; youth wages, superannuation for those aged under 18, insecure work, safety and training, trainee, and apprentice conditions of employment.
23. Affiliates are encouraged to:
 - a) Include young people specifically in union campaigns, and EBA campaigns and negotiations, to promote ongoing involvement and skill development.
 - b) Include specific reference in all major campaigns to young people and develop specific strategies to engage with them.