

## Services, Industry & Resources

1. Congress notes that services, manufacturing industry and resources combine together to employ the large majority of workers in Australia. They are the main source of employment and wealth in our community. They are also inter-dependent. Public services are essential in supporting a strong economy and a fair community. They help to generate a skilled, healthy and mobile workforce and underpin the generation of much of the wealth we need to become a more prosperous, fair and inclusive society.
2. Congress agrees that a fairer society will not simply appear – it needs to be campaigned, bargained and argued for. And unions have a leading role to play in making this happen.

### A Fair Service Economy

3. Congress notes that private and public services employ the large majority of workers in Australia and that improving their pay and conditions is vital to securing a fair and prosperous future for our country. Congress supports the campaigns by all unions with members in services to increase wages, protect jobs, improve the quality of work, and strengthen the collective voice of employees. The proportion of the workforce employed in services is likely to increase in years ahead. The quality of employment in services must increase as well.

### Sustainable Financial Services

4. Congress notes that the financial services sector directly employs over 700,000 workers, with a further 1 million employed indirectly in associated roles across Australia. Employment in banking, insurance, superannuation and other parts of finance plays a vital role in our economy, generating incomes for over a million families across every major city and regional centre.
5. The skills, hard work and professionalism of workers in finance have been responsible for making the financial services industry in Australia one of the most efficient and successful in the world. They deliver a range of essential services that millions of workers, families and businesses rely upon to pay, borrow and invest for their future as well as to conduct their everyday lives.

6. Congress recognises:
  - a) The vital work performed by insurance workers when providing assistance to the thousands of Australian families devastated by floods and fire;
  - b) The effort and commitment provided by superannuation workers in striving to achieve the best retirement income results for Australian workers;
  - c) The dedication shown by bank workers to sustain our banks when many others around the world failed during the depths of the Global Financial Crisis.
7. However, Congress notes that despite this hard work and success many employers in the finance sector, particularly in insurance and banking, are cutting jobs and off-shoring work. During the Global Financial Crisis some of these same employers have received significant government support, in the form of the \$1 million Bank Deposit Guarantee Scheme, at considerable potential risk to the taxpayer.
8. It is not lost on Congress that the big four banks which benefited most from these government support programs have made record profits every year since, culminating in combined profits of \$24 billion in 2011.
9. Despite public assistance and large profits, many of these employers continue to slash job numbers and send work overseas to be performed by cheaper and more vulnerable labour.
10. These trends present a major threat to the incomes and cohesion of families and communities across our country.
11. Congress wants to see a financial services industry that combines growth and innovation with high and sustainable levels of employment. To this end Congress agrees to campaign for the following:
  - a) The establishment of a government taskforce, with representatives from unions and employers, charged with developing and implementing a plan for the future of financial services that will prioritise generating more and better jobs in Australia;
  - b) The mobilisation of political, community and union pressure on financial institutions to recognise that employees are important stakeholders in the future of financial services and their interests must be considered alongside those of shareholders;
  - c) A clear statement of intent by government that any further public assistance to financial institutions during the on-going global economic crisis will be conditional on those institutions committing to working with unions to protect the jobs and pay of staff;

- d) A new requirement that financial institutions can only hold customer data overseas with the knowledge and consent of each customer;
- e) Tax incentives that encourage employers to relocate work that has been offshored back to Australia;
- f) To help counter the growing crisis of staff morale across the financial sector, new models of pay which place less emphasis on short-term incentives and recognise the legitimate desire among employees for a stable living wage.

## Our Growing Private Services Sector

- 12. Congress notes that much of the work performed by private sector clerical and administrative workers, including the almost 300,000 employees working in call centres, is of an insecure nature.
- 13. In Australia we are seeing an increase in the offshoring of administration work like payroll, data entry, customer service, accounting services, IT, call centre and legal services work. This “back office “skilled work is vital to our economy and to the efficiency of the businesses that rely upon it. Offshoring frequently diminishes the quality of the work performed by underestimating the necessary synergies provided by internal providers, and the resultant deskilling of the workforce is a major blow to the competitiveness and sustainability of our services sector. As a nation we cannot allow this to continue and congress agrees to campaign for the following:
  - a) Comprehensive industry plans involving all stakeholders including government and unions to retain and enhance the capacity of these professional service sector workers across all Australian regions.
  - b) Maximisation of the benefits of the NBN for job creation whilst at the same time leveraging the added benefits of our multicultural society and proximity to Asia.
  - c) Country of origin disclosure legislation so that consumers are aware when services they use are offshore so they can make informed purchasing decisions.
  - d) The elimination of sham contracting in particular in the call centre industry which denies already vulnerable and insecure workers their proper wages and entitlements.

## Quality Public Services

14. Congress agrees that accessible, accountable and adequately funded public services are essential to securing a fairer and more prosperous Australia. They play a vital role in supporting families, communities and businesses across our country. Attempts to portray public services as a drain on our economy are inaccurate and divisive. They are crucial to the development of a modern, productive and inclusive society.
15. Congress notes the contribution made by public sector workers in Commonwealth, State, Territory and local Government each and every day across the country. Whether it is the provision of family benefits payments or pensions; protection of our borders; education, health, emergency and police services; preserving and promoting our cultural heritage; running courts; providing public transport and utilities, scientific research or developing solutions to the highly complex policy challenges our nation faces. The contributions made by Public Services workers at the time of natural disasters and the provision of essential services public services post flood, cyclone, bush fire is acknowledged with thanks by Congress.
16. Government economic and legislative involvement is essential to provide opportunities for all Australians, improve equity through redistribution, provide public safety and security and protect the community through the regulation necessary in a market economy.
17. Congress notes that the level of GDP spending on government in Australia is among the lowest of OECD countries. Congress agrees that government is not simply the provider of last resort but that there are many services and functions that must remain public and agrees to campaign for commonwealth, state and local government services that are funded and organised on the following principles:

- a) Consistent funding

A short-term and dogmatic preoccupation with budget surpluses, driven largely by party political positioning, is inconsistent with building and maintaining high-quality and accessible public services. In tough economic times workers, families and businesses rely even more on being able to access the support that only government can provide. Cutting budgets, jobs and offices in such a context undermines service quality and undermines the long term capacity of government at all levels to deal with the complex challenges our society faces. Arbitrary cost-cutting measures such as so-called “efficiency dividends” should not be used to meet budget shortfalls. When necessary, funding to help maintain public services should be supported by sustainable levels of government borrowing.

- b) No privatisation

Private companies become involved in public services for one reason only: to make a profit. This leads to cutting costs and cutting corners – with the result

that service quality often deteriorates and, where charging is involved, prices increase. Profit is put before the interests of citizens and employees. Public services should be funded and delivered on the basis, not of profitability, but of need, quality and democratic accountability.

c) Model employment

Public services employ nearly 2 million workers across urban and regional Australia. However, government is not only a major employer, it is a public institution that should embody the values of fairness and equality that we want to see practiced across our society. All levels of government should therefore seek to operate as model employers. This should involve strong commitments to:

- Fair and equal pay, regardless of department, agency or location;
- Giving staff the time, training and resources to do the best possible job;
- Collective good faith bargaining rights and union representation for public sector workers;
- Secure, full-time and on-going employment for those staff who want it.

d) More and better social infrastructures

Congress acknowledges the increased investment by government in areas of social infrastructure in recent years. However, there remains a pressing need to increase investment in areas such as social housing, local health facilities, school buildings and child care facilities. The financial costs of doing so will be compensated for, in whole or in part, by a reduction in the social costs generated by poor health, crime and limited access to good employment opportunities. Such investment should be focused on those low income and regional communities who have often suffered most from systematic underinvestment, deindustrialisation and the impact of slowing economic growth.

## Safe, Accessible and Integrated Transport Services

18. Congress recognises that Australia's long-term economic prosperity and commitment to delivering improved environmental, security and social justice outcomes is dependent on the development of efficient and nationally integrated freight and passenger movement throughout Australia, and in meeting Australia's export and import requirements. Congress supports the principles that underpin the Federal government's National Transport Strategy, National Ports Strategy and National Freight Strategy and will support their continued development.

19. In particular, Congress supports a transport industry organised and operated on the following principles:

- a) Transportation decision-making processes that support and provide resources for union participation;

- b) To commit to support the development of a regional seafarer labour market in the near region (Pacific Islands, PNG and Timor Leste and including Indonesia and Philippines) aimed at creating employment opportunities and skill/career development for regional seafarers engaged in the international dimensions of Australian shipping that will emerge from implementation of the 2012 shipping reform package;
  - c) Employers that recognise the right of all workers involved in the transport industry to be represented by unions, to be covered by a collective agreement, and to fully participate in union activities;
  - d) Rates of pay and conditions for employees that remove pressure to work unsafely to receive proper remuneration;
  - e) Co-operation between unions with members employed in transport to secure the best outcomes for those members;
  - f) Transport systems that are operated to prioritise safety and environmental sustainability, and which increase access by members of socially and economically disadvantaged groups to affordable and efficient forms of public transport;
  - g) Sustained investment by Federal Government that links infrastructure funding assistance in regional and rural areas to the provision of apprenticeships and traineeships.
20. Congress affirms its continued support for the detailed road, rail and maritime transport policies adopted in 2009. In addition, this Congress calls on the government:
- a) To follow up its 2012 shipping reform legislation package with a targeted shipping industry investment and innovation plan aimed at growing a maritime cluster in Australia.
  - b) Congress notes that such a plan will involve: inclusion of shipping specific provisions in bi-lateral and multi-lateral trade agreements to encourage and leverage a fair participation of Australian registered ships in the international export trades and foreign capital investment in the Australian shipping industry; a global marketing effort by Austrade to promote the Australian international shipping register; a banking and finance plan to nurture a ship finance and insurance market in Australia; investment in innovation in ship design, propulsion and fuel systems to ensure shipping contributes to reduced greenhouse emissions from freight transport; and strategic use of Australian Government procurement in heavy lift transportation to ensure Australian shipping secures access to Government transportation requirements.

- c) To introduce incentives, such as lower fares and increased availability, to encourage the use of mass public transport as a key means of reducing transport related emissions as part of the transition to a low carbon economy.
- d) Congress notes that no emissions targets have been set for the transport sector, which is the third highest polluting sector in Australia. Given the low emissions of rail freight and mass public transport, Congress calls on the Government to support incentives to encourage their use in a growing freight market including working towards exempting these modes of transportation from a carbon price or future emissions trading schemes
- e) To improve the National Freight Strategy by developing appropriate strategies that will address current and future skills and labour shortages in the urban and freight transport sectors.
- f) To further expand efficient, integrated and low-emissions freight transport systems to better connect our roads, railways, ports and ships.
- g) To hold a summit of unions, employers, relevant ministers and investment experts with the aim of designing new policy levers that will attract greater investment by our superannuation funds into our road, rail and port infrastructures. These levers may include the streamlining of tendering processes, infrastructure bonds, the rebalancing of investment risk, and/or giving greater prominence to relatively low-risk and ethical 'nation building' investments.
- h) To ensure the effective management of fatigue in the rail transport industry through the inclusion of minimum rest breaks and maximum shift lengths in model rail safety law.

#### Aviation services

- 21. Congress notes the need to effectively regulate and protect the interests of Australian workers and the community in the face of increased globalisation and complex corporate arrangements of airlines operating within and out of Australia.
- 22. Congress believes the aviation industry's use of temporary workers, labour hire and contracting out of services, within Australia as well as internationally, undermines the job security and quality of employment for Australian aviation workers.
- 23. Congress notes with concern the case of Jet Connect as an example of outsourcing Australian jobs to international labour at significantly lower terms and conditions of employment.
- 24. Congress believes the future sustainability of the Australian aviation industry is dependent on the ongoing development of a permanent, highly-skilled and well paid workforce. In particular, Congress calls for:

- a) Congress to note with concern Qantas's continual restructure of its maintenance operations with no long term vision or commitment to Australia. Congress notes that there are 9700 workers employed across aircraft maintenance repair organisations (MROs). Of these, Qantas employs 6000 workers. Over the periods 2007-10 Qantas trained over 53% of all apprentices and trainees in the industry. The aviation sector is an important of the Australian economy. Congress urges Government to conduct an industry specific round table to access the challenges and future opportunities for the sector.
  - b) An end to overseas outsourcing of maintenance, which unions believe has eroded Australia's traditionally high maintenance standards;
  - c) Ongoing investment in education and employment opportunities in order to sustain a highly skilled aviation industry workforce and infrastructure;
  - d) The elimination of overseas-based labour on inferior contracts being used by Australian carriers to undermine the employment conditions of Australian workers.
25. With the support of the ACTU, unions will campaign and bargain for provisions in workplace agreements which reduce the incidence of casual and contract labour, improve job security and access to permanent work for casual and contract labour and maintain parity of wages and conditions for all employees including labour hire and contract workers.
26. Congress condemns the actions taken by Qantas Airways in 2011, locking out employees in order to force arbitration of such bargaining claims. The ACTU and unions will campaign for amendments to the Fair Work Act in line with 2012 Congress policy.
27. Congress supports the development of the aviation sector and in particular further developing industry as an important export industry, by:
- a) Retaining and strengthening current provisions that prevent foreign ownership of Australian airlines and keep the governance of these airlines in Australia. This includes, the maintenance of Qantas as Australia's international carrier;
  - b) The growth of air freight through upgraded airport facilities, introduction of chain of responsibility principles in cargo freight terminal operations, and improvements in the logistics chain;
  - c) Direct investment in local infrastructure to increase volume of flights and traffic carried by international airlines to create jobs.

28. Congress reiterates the 2009 policy that the safety of the travelling public and airline industry workers is paramount and must come before economic considerations. To ensure safety standards are maintained Congress calls for:
- a) The retention of and provision of adequate resources to aviation regulators and service providers;
  - b) Close scrutiny of new low-cost entrants to ensure that they meet the highest safety standards;
  - c) Enforcement of security measures to airside secure areas by employees, contractors and labour hire;
  - d) Mandatory security training for all aviation workers;
  - e) Ensuring all air cargo travelling on passenger aircraft is security screened;
  - f) Returning any contracted out air traffic services to the public sector.
29. Congress reiterates the 2009 policy calling for the creation by the Federal Government of an explicit regulatory regime and plan for the sustainability of the aviation industry.
30. Congress will campaign to enforce the procurement guidelines endorsed by this Congress to:
- a) Ensure the Australian Government's procurement policy includes an objective to retain and create jobs and develop and support the local aviation industry in Australia;
  - b) Require that contractors supplying goods and services to government adhere to ethical employment practices;
  - c) Ensure contractors who perform government work are contractually responsible for their subcontractors' adherence to this policy.
31. Congress notes the employment stimulation effects of targeted infrastructure spending. Whilst the public sector has committed significant funding to infrastructure in recent years, specifically through stimulus packages designed to shield Australia from the worst effects of the Global Financial Crisis, there remains a need for increased private sector and public-private investment in transport infrastructure.

## Securing our Industrial Future

32. Congress agrees that our long-term prosperity as a trading nation requires that government, unions and employers work together to secure the balanced development and growth of our industrial base. Increasing our capacity to

manufacture and extract goods that can be traded fairly with the rest of the world will be vital to our collective future.

### Manufacturing Matters

33. Congress agrees that a diverse, innovative and growing manufacturing base is vital to our future. Our manufacturing sector employs nearly 1 million people, comprises one-third of our exports, and accounts for one-quarter of all expenditure by business on research and development. As an employer, exporter and source of innovation manufacturing is a vital source of our collective prosperity.
34. However, Congress notes that years of sustained investment in jobs, skills and technical infrastructures can be too easily destroyed by turbulence in the global economy. Since the onset of the Global Financial Crisis in 2008, over 100,000 manufacturing jobs in Australia have been lost. Once gone, jobs of similar quality in the locations they are needed most are often difficult to recreate. Therefore government, working with unions and employers, has a vital role to play in securing an economic and regulatory environment in which manufacturing can grow, innovate and compete in fair global markets.
35. Congress notes the Gillard Government's recognition of the importance of manufacturing and its contribution to the Australian economy in establishing the Prime Minister's Manufacturing Taskforce that has brought together unions and industry with government to commence tackling the issues confronting the manufacturing sector. The taskforce has recognised the importance of continued investment in research and development, innovation, access to finance, skills, leadership development and access to markets both domestically and internationally. Congress notes the good work commenced by the Prime Minister's Manufacturing Taskforce and agrees with the need for the Taskforce to now deliver a genuine plan, encompassing the following action areas, that enables our manufacturing industry to make the structural shift required to ensure the viability of the industry now and in the future. Congress agrees that an effective long-term future for our manufacturing industry must include action in the following areas:

a) **Lifting economy wide productivity growth**

Congress notes that problems of productivity growth in Australian manufacturing pre-date the Fair Work Act and therefore rejects political attempts by some in the public debate to portray the Fair Work system as a barrier to growth.

Congress agrees that increasing productivity in manufacturing must form part of a broader agenda to increase productivity across our economy. This must involve action in the following areas:

- i. **Fixing our cities:** To preserve and enhance the position of Australian cities as some of the most liveable and investment-friendly places in the world urgent action is needed to reduce our massive infrastructure deficit. This means sustained investment in social infrastructure, urban transport and creating world-class rail, road, sea and air linkages for freight and passenger transport.

- ii. Currency smoothing: The Reserve Bank of Australia must be prepared to intervene in currency markets when the value of the dollar is above 'fair value'.
- iii. Countercyclical fiscal stimulus: Government must prepare a package of stimulus and investment measures that are ready to be implemented in the event of a worsening of the on-going global financial crisis or a sharp fall in China's economic growth.

b) **Manufacturing Leaders' Group**

Congress agrees that there is no short-term fix that will solve the problems manufacturing currently confronts. This will require sustained and co-ordinated input from government, unions and employers. To this end Congress calls for the formation of a Manufacturing Leaders Group, comprising government, union and employer representatives, that will have on-going and long-term responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of manufacturing policies and recommending new initiatives.

Congress agrees that the key tasks for this group will include the following:

- i. To identify how and what extent government can assist firms to renew their capital stock;
- ii. Campaigning for a change to resources policy so that when considering the issuing of offshore exploration licenses, government will require successful bidders to meet minimum employment, labour relations and Australian participation standards in the granting of acreage releases;
- iii. To develop a plan for new manufacturing that will stimulate start-ups, new foreign investment, diversification, better exploitation of domestic R&D activities, and new investment in clean-tech;
- iv. To identify how Australian firms should prepare to exploit the new opportunities that will arise from the continued development of Asia in general and China in particular;
- v. Better integration of shipping reform, maritime employment and maritime skills development into resource projects, focusing on international trade where Australian exports are crucial to Asia region economies.

c) **Building better manufacturing businesses**

Congress agrees that the future of manufacturing lies in moving up the value chain: producing more skill-intensive and technology-intensive goods that can be sold at prices that will help to deliver decent jobs and good wages in Australia. The government agency Enterprise Connect (EC) can help to facilitate this. Congress calls for the following:

- i. A budget for Enterprise Connect that is adequate to providing the level of assistance many manufacturing firms need;
- ii. A role for Enterprise Connect that involves providing more specialist assistance to help firms build their technical and innovation capacities;
- iii. A review of what is the best means for enhancing the take-up and effective utilisation of Information Communication Technology by manufacturing firms, and Small and Medium Enterprises in particular, and making them 'NBN' ready.

d) **Winning more international business**

Congress agrees that assisting industry to access global supply chains and win international business would be aided by the greater integration of the functions and operations of Austrade, Enterprise Connect, the Industry Capability Network, and the Export Finance & Insurance Corporation. Congress calls on government to consult and review how the resources and skills these organisations have can be better utilised.

Congress further calls for the more effective application of Australian Industry Participation policies so that barriers to Australian firms winning orders at home and abroad are removed. Winning such orders will provide many firms with a crucial source of revenue during their processes of restructuring and renewal.

e) **Building 'High Performance Workplaces' (HPW)**

High Performance Workplaces can significantly lift productivity (as appropriately measured and defined by each sector) and profitability. Congress calls on government to take the lead in diffusing knowledge and understanding of High Performance Workplaces principles and practices among Australian firms. This should include working with unions and employers to initiate pilot programs that make clear the leadership, culture and management practices required for High Performance Workplaces to succeed.

f) **Effective action against dumping**

The dumping of goods into Australian markets can cause significant material injury to our industries. It also undermines public confidence in our trade policy and the international trading system.

Congress therefore welcomes the measures announced by the Government in 2011 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Australia's anti-dumping regime. These include facilitating easier access to the anti-dumping system and increasing resources available to Customs and Border Protection. Congress calls on the government to regularly review and consult on the effectiveness of these reforms with the aim of ensuring that they result in a more pro-active and effective policing of dumping than has hitherto been the case.

## A Strong and Sustainable Resources Sector

36. Congress supports a strong and sustainable resources sector in Australia. As much as anyone, unions and their members who work in the sector and related industries have an interest in ensuring the ongoing strength and sustainability of the resources sector. Congress notes and welcomes the extent of current activity in both resources construction and resources operations and the pipeline of planned investment in coming years.
37. At the same time, Congress agrees we need to ensure the benefits of the current resources sector expansion are not lost or distributed unequally. The sector is benefiting from access to resources that belong to all of us and we should as a nation and community look at how the fruits of the resources boom can be shared in a more equitable manner.
38. Congress agrees the following priorities to guide the union movement's ongoing involvement in the resources sector and in related policy debates:
  - a) Support for and participation in tripartite mechanisms as the most effective way for dealing with ongoing policy and industrial issues in the sector;
  - b) Highlighting the role of industrial relations as a critical factor in how the sector responds to skills and workforce challenges;
  - c) The introduction and effective implementation of the Mineral Resources Rent Tax;
  - d) Increasing participation of groups currently under-represented in the resources sector, particularly women, indigenous people, older workers and the unemployed;
  - e) Increasing the training effort of the resources sector, particularly through improved apprenticeship training rates, as well as up-skilling of existing workers, and supported, where appropriate, through the introduction of structured industry contributions or levies;
  - f) A role for migration that is subject to genuine labour market testing and which recognises the primary right of Australian workers to Australian jobs;
  - g) Advocating for greater local content and procurement in major resource sector projects and operations;
  - h) Improving social and community infrastructure around resource sector projects and operations, including a feasibility study into the development of a regional city in the Pilbara;
  - i) Advocating a broader focus that recognises the impact of the resources sector on other industries and local and regional communities.

### Support for tripartite approaches

39. Congress believes that tripartite co-operation between unions, employers and government is essential to provide the necessary oversight and co-ordination for the sector to respond to the skills and workforce challenges that lie ahead. Congress welcomes the establishment of a new resources sector tripartite body in 2011 and agrees that the following issues should be considered on a tripartite basis:
- a) The medium and longer-term outlook for activity in the sector;
  - b) Support for and early identification of local and national procurement opportunities;
  - c) Better coordination of labour and skill needs of the sector, as opposed to un-coordinated enterprise by enterprise, project-by-project approaches. As a practical example, a tripartite body could use the often long lead times of projects to help plan for the transfer of workers from project to project across the sector as different projects - or phases within projects - start and finish;
  - d) Better coordination of industrial relations across the sector, including the mediation of any disputes;
  - e) Provision of social infrastructure, housing accommodation and community facilities to ensure attraction and retention is maximised.

### Mineral Resources Rent Tax

40. Congress strongly supports the introduction and effective implementation of the Mineral Resources Rent Tax (MRRT). The MRRT is critical to ensuring the resources boom produces real and lasting benefits for all Australians. A share of the proceeds of the MRRT should be used to address housing and social infrastructure needs in those regions affected by resource sector operations, while also recognising the purpose of the MRRT is to provide benefits across the community and not just those initiatives where the resources sector itself is a major beneficiary.

### Meeting current and future skill needs

41. Congress notes the strong demand for skilled labour in the resources sector, particularly in the construction phase of major projects.
42. Congress endorses the finding of the National Resources Sector Employment Taskforce that the sector as a whole has not done enough to train its own workforce to meet this demand, particularly through apprenticeships. The capacity to offer high wages and poach from other sectors, combined with ready access to temporary migration, has allowed companies to meet their skill needs with little thought to investment in skills development.

43. Project owners, contractors, and employers in the sector must take responsibility for correcting this poor record. The focus should be on local solutions to meet the demand for workforce skills in the sector. This requires renewed effort on a number of fronts, such as:
- a) Boosting the role of apprenticeships and traineeships in the sector;
  - b) Up-skilling of existing workers to make best use of the current workforce;
  - c) Structured industry contributions or levies;
  - d) a real commitment to workforce development and planning;
  - e) Improving the participation of disadvantaged or under-represented groups, particularly indigenous people in these regions, and women, as well as older workers, school leavers, and the unemployed;
  - f) Focusing on the role of industrial relations to address skill needs.

Increasing participation of women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, unemployed, older workers

44. Congress calls for renewed and sustained effort from the resources sector in making more and better use of the available pool of skilled workers. Congress believes there is considerable scope for improved workforce representation across a number of groups, including women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, older workers, and the unemployed. Congress notes that this applies not only to the resources sector, but across all industries and sectors.
45. The sector should adopt agreed targets and strategies for the employment of each of these groups, including entry-level apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities.
46. Unions will identify and advocate for measures to achieve sustained increases in labour force participation across these groups. These include:
- a) Necessary cultural changes required to support their participation in the resources sector;
  - b) Better support networks and mentoring in and outside the workplace;
  - c) More family-friendly working arrangements;
  - d) An appropriate standard of community facilities and infrastructure, in terms of schools, hospitals, child care and affordable housing;
  - e) Support for relocation and labour mobility;

- f) Targeted responses that would improve participation, such as language, literacy and numeracy training, and other skills gap training.

#### Skilled migration

- 47. Congress recognises there is a role for immigration to play in filling short and longer-term skill gaps in the resources sector, but emphasises this should not be done at the expense of employing and training the local workforce. There is much that can be done in terms of employing locally, including participation of groups currently under-represented, and all these measures should be fully explored and utilised before the use of overseas labour becomes an option. Congress notes that this applies not only to the resources sector, but across all industries or sectors.
- 48. Consistent with the Congress policy on skilled migration generally, the use of overseas labour in the resources sector, including through Enterprise and Regional Migration Agreements, should be subject to strict labour market testing and other conditions set out in that policy. Unions in the resources sector will give particular attention to the terms and conditions of proposed Enterprise Migration Agreements covering major resource projects, and will continue to advocate for an online Jobs Board to ensure that Australian workers are being given every opportunity to fill positions on those projects.

#### Development of regional communities and quality infrastructure

- 49. Congress supports the development of major regional communities as attractive places for workers to work and live, and where workers are connected to the community in which they are employed. This provides a more sustainable approach to securing labour for major resource sector projects and operations than an over-reliance on FIFO and overseas workers. Investing in the development of new regional cities and the social infrastructure to support them should be part of the pay-off from the current mining boom and will help to secure its longer term future. Unions will advocate for:
  - a) A defined minimum level of community facilities that enable living in mining towns to be a reasonable choice for resource sector workers and their families, to be determined on a tripartite basis. These facilities should have significant mandated local content;
  - b) A feasibility study to be commissioned into establishing a major city in the Pilbara region of WA;
  - c) A share of the MRRT to be used to fund infrastructure needs in regions affected by resource sector operations.