

Thursday 23 November, 2017

Huge win for workers at Woolies

More than 1500 warehouse workers at Woolworths have won 4% annual pay increases, double the national average.

Workers have also improved redundancy conditions, more than doubling the maximum redundancy payments for workers. These improvements were won with no trade-offs. NUW members won by standing together and being prepared to take strike action for secure jobs and a fair pay rise.

The National Union of Workers ran an extremely strong campaign which has resulted in a great outcome for these workers.

In a parallel deal Woolworths have agreed to ensure that farm workers in its fresh food supply chain have their legal entitlements protected and their right to join their union respected. This breakthrough agreement comes after the NUW campaigned for two years to expose wage theft and human rights violations in the supply chains of major Australian supermarkets.

A major platform of this new supply-chain agreement is prequalifying labour hire companies. This will mean those who want to trade in labour on farms will need to prove that they are not breaking Australian workplace laws, and workers who join the union and speak up about violations will be protected.

Statement from ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“Across Australia, wages are flat-lining, except where there are unions like the NUW standing united to improve pay and conditions.

“This win will see farm workers in the supply chain benefit significantly. When workers pull together, take collective action, and stand up for better pay and conditions, they can win and change the way big businesses, like Woolworths, operate.”

“This was great work by the NUW members, who knew that exploitation along the supply chain needed to be addressed by those at the top of the supply chain. But we need to change the laws that currently prohibit workers from bargaining along supply chains. Workers need more power in bargaining.”

“Workers must be able to bargain where the power is, not simply with their direct employer.”

“If you want to increase your pay and conditions, you have to join your union.

“We are working to change the rules for working people to make it easier to bargain for better outcomes, and to ensure workers’ have strong rights that are upheld.”

“But it shouldn’t have been as hard as it was for these workers. The rules which mean workers have to jump through endless hoops to win secure jobs and a pay rise need to change.

“We offer our congratulations to the bravery and solidarity of the workers who delivered this tremendous outcome.

“This week we have shown that collective action can result in workers overcoming the power of major corporations.”

ENDS

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