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Remembering Rana Plaza - fight for the living

The ACTU has lent the voice of working Australians to a call for recalcitrant fashion companies to sign a critical safety accord on the fifth anniversary of the Rana Plaza building collapse which killed more than 1100 people working in a Bangladesh clothing factory in 2013.

The 2018 Bangladesh Fire and Safety Accord, which builds on a 2013 agreement signed in the wake of the tragedy, is vital to improving safety standards and preventing another tragedy.

The ACTU issued a joint statement with unions and civil society groups including Oxfam, the CFMMEU textile division, Baptist World Aid, Stop the Traffik, ActionAid, Union Aid Abroad, The Clean Clothes Campaign, the Human Rights Law Centre, Good on You, MSIA and the Uniting Church, calling on those brands who are refusing to sign to do the right thing.

While many iconic Australian brands have signed the accord, major brands Just Group (Just Jeans, Peter Alexander), Best and Less, Myer, Fast Future (Valley Girl, TEMT) and Country Road have refused to take part in the process, which ensures basic safety for two million Bangladeshi garment workers – 70 percent of whom are women.

Several other brands including Noni B, the Workwear Group and Licensing Essentials have so far refused to sign the 2018 accord, despite being signatories to previous accords.

Brands who have done the right thing and signed the accord include including Kmart, Target, Big W, Cotton On, Forever New, Specialty Fashion Group (Katie's, Millers, City Chic and Rivers), APG and Co (Saba, Jag and Sportscraft) and Designworks (Everlast, Republic, Dunlop and Mooks).

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“Everybody has a right to go home safe from work. But for 1100 people in Bangladesh five years ago, this right was denied.

“It is our responsibility to ensure this never happens again.

“Every Australian clothing brand must sign this accord to ensure that people are safe at work, or they will find that people choose to purchase clothes from more ethical producers.”

ENDS

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