

Wednesday, 12 January 2011

Unions express sadness at Queensland flood devastation and support disaster relief appeal

The Australian Council of Trade Unions shares the shock of all Australians at the ferocity and devastation caused by floods across much of Queensland over the past week.

On behalf of all Australian unions, ACTU President Ged Kearney expressed sadness and condolences over the loss of life and the destruction of homes and workplaces by this unprecedented natural disaster.

The ACTU has today initiated a union-wide fundraising drive by donating \$10,000 to the Queensland Premier's Flood Relief Appeal, and has called on Australia's 2 million union members and their families to dig deep.

"Apart from the tragic loss of life and widespread havoc, the floods pose a serious direct threat to the livelihoods of tens of thousands of Queensland workers living in the affected areas and indirectly to the state and national economies," Ms Kearney said.

"The thoughts of the entire union movement goes out to the victims at this time. There are thousands of our members who have lost their homes and possessions, whose livelihoods have been devastated, and some who may have lost friends or relatives.

"Australian unionists have a long and proud history of helping their fellow workmates in times of natural disaster. It is at times like this, in the face of incredible adversity, that our national character of caring and sharing shines.

"We can again take pride in the dedication and hard work of union members in emergency services, healthcare, the community sector, media covering the events, and others involved in the disaster."

The ACTU will initiate a union-wide approach by making a \$10,000 donation to the Premier's Relief Appeal.

"Already, some of our affiliates have shown incredible generosity, including the Australian Workers' Union, which has contributed \$50,000. We also encourage union members to take up a collection in their workplace and for employers to match whatever is raised."

Donations should be made to the Queensland Premier's Flood Relief Appeal by phoning 1800 219 028 or visiting the website at <http://www.qld.gov.au/floods/donate.html>

Ms Kearney urged employers to show compassion to any workers affected by the flooding, including allowing paid leave to deal with the emergency.

Union members who need advice, or know of a colleague or relative experiencing hardship or work difficulties because of the floods should contact Unions Australia on 1300 4 UNION so that appropriate support or advice can be arranged.

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