



The ACTU's policy priorities for 2003 address key areas of concern for working Australians and their families. These issues are highlighted by the ACTU's *National Survey of Workplace Issues 2002*, covering 8,259 employees from across Australia.

WORK AND FAMILY TEST CASE:

82% of employees surveyed agreed that workplace laws should incorporate more family friendly provisions. The ACTU's Work and Family Test Case will seek changes including:

- right to part-time work for employees returning from parental leave (68% support)
- right to emergency family leave – eg care for sick children (78% support)
- extend current UNPAID parental leave from 1 year to 2 years (61% support)

PAID MATERNITY LEAVE:

66% of employees surveyed said a period of maternity leave should be paid.

- The ACTU is campaigning for a nationally legislated paid maternity leave scheme guaranteeing 14 weeks leave for all working women
- Unions are seeking better paid maternity leave rights through enterprise bargaining.

MINIMUM WAGES:

69% of employees experienced financial difficulty in the last year and 63% said they were worse off since the introduction of the GST in 2000.

- The ACTU's national Minimum Wages Case 2003 is seeking a \$24.60 increase in award pay rates, which would increase the Federal Minimum Wage to \$12 per hour.

EXECUTIVE SALARIES/CORPORATE GOVERNANCE:

74% of employees surveyed were concerned about high executive salaries. The ACTU is pushing for corporate governance reforms to prevent company rorts and failures including

- removing corporate tax deductibility for corporate salaries over \$1 million
- increasing penalties under the Corporations law for breach of Directors duties
- banning auditors from providing non-audit services to audit clients
- enforcing disclosure requirements for all executive remuneration

PROTECTING EMPLOYEE ENTITLEMENTS:

66% of those surveyed were concerned about the security of their accrued entitlements.

- The ACTU is campaigning for a nationally legislated employer-levy scheme to guarantee 100% of employee entitlements at no cost to the taxpayer, and
- Corporations Law changes to give employee creditors first priority in insolvencies

REDUNDANCY TEST CASE:

80% of employees wanted more say in workplace decisions affecting them. 66% were concerned about their job security. 30% felt less secure in their job than one year ago. The ACTU's Redundancy Test Case in the Industrial Relations Commission in May would

- double minimum severance pay for long-serving employees from 8 to 16 weeks pay
- require employers to consult employees affected by impending redundancies.

REASONABLE HOURS:

79% of employees surveyed supported a limit or cap on weekly working hours.

- Unions are building on the success of the ACTU's Reasonable Hours Test Case last year in having the new right to refuse overtime included in enterprise agreements.
- The ACTU Congress in August 2003 is set to debate an overall cap on working hours.