



ORGANISING ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER WORKERS IN UNIONS

Advancing the representation and participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in unions

1. Congress is committed to ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers have strong and effective union representation in their workplace and in their union structures.
2. The capacity of the union movement to represent and organise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers depend on the movement's ability to reflect views and address issues that are particularly relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members must be able to fully participate in all levels of union decision making processes and structures. Congress commits to the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members in elected positions in unions; acknowledging the need to better reflect the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.
3. By creating these opportunities this will improve the union's ability to attract the best possible leadership talent and tap into the growth potential of organising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.
4. Congress encourages all unions to recruit, retain and develop Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, delegates, workers, elected officials, and leaders.
5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers are more likely to be engaged in low skill, low paid employment, with little or no power to bargain directly with their employer over wages and conditions. This makes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers particularly vulnerable to exploitation and ill treatment.
6. In an active effort to engage with the barriers preventing Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples from accessing safe and secure work Australian Unions recognises the disproportionate impact of bullying, harassment, underpayment, racism and discrimination on Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander workers. There needs to be more education provided to people about their rights at work.
7. Australian unions will engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers across the movement through the facilitation and resourcing of an ACTU Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Committee, and the First Nations Workers Alliance and affiliates will commit to participate and engage in the work of the Committee.
8. The ACTU Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Committee will focus on nationally co-ordinated actions in a number of priority areas, including:
 - a) The work of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Committee and the First Nations Workers Alliance.

- b) Wage Justice Campaign for Community Development Program Workers or its replacement If harmful to workers and their communities, is punitive, and doesn't have the basic workplace rights & conditions, including minimum wages paid for work done.
 - c) Voice, Treaty, Truth
 - d) Black lives Matter – Australian Deaths in Custody
 - e) Organising, recruitment and education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers;
 - f) Campaigns with a focus on the pay and conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers;
9. The Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Committee will focus on highlighting issues affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and ensuring that the movement responds appropriately.
 10. The Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Committee will ensure that best practice organising, recruitment and engagement strategies are shared throughout the movement through mechanisms such as:
 - a) Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Biannual Conferences & Forums.
 - b) And the Inclusion of regional & remote visits to engage workers, including CDP workers, to join & participate in unions.
 11. Public funding is tied to the employment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, is a driver that employers use to justify precariously employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Congress commits to investigate the extent to which the government funding model is used by employers to justify precarious employment.
 12. Unions should have an easy point of call to personalise the membership joining process for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples. Congress therefore recommends that all affiliates appoint an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Officer in an identified position in National offices & each state and territory. Congress additionally recommends publicising the contact details of the Officer so that they may be contacted with queries about joining or getting involved.

Consultation, engagement and education

13. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers themselves are in the best position to voice their own issues and concerns, and therefore affiliates should actively attempt to engage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander union members in decision making around campaigns and organising efforts.
14. The achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should be regularly showcased in union communications, publications, and online content.
15. Unions in conjunction with FNWA should develop specific materials on workplace rights that are targeted towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers and should seek active input from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members in developing these materials.
16. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members should be engaged with their union's decision-making bodies, through an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander advisory committee or similar structure, with reporting directly to their executive.
17. Affiliates should entrench these structures into the rules of their organisations, including through the possibility of mandating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representative positions on committee structures.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's participation in union structures

18. Congress will encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates and employees to participate in union structures by:
- a) Setting appropriate goals, actions, resources, and timeframes to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's active participation in the union, including the use of quotas and other affirmative action measures;
 - b) Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members have influence in setting union agendas, priorities and
 - c) campaign activities and their issues addressed, when developing union industrial priorities and growth campaigns;
 - d) Removing barriers which discourage the participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in union activities by taking into consideration the availability of employees and delegates with family responsibilities;
 - e) Identifying and sponsoring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates to move into roles including elected positions;
 - f) Encouraging and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees to take on more senior roles within the union;
 - g) Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees are afforded equal opportunities to access career development such as acting in higher duties and board positions;
 - h) Developing and implementing policies for union employees including the right to part time work following parental leave, flexible work arrangements, and protection against sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination. Provide mandatory training for all officials and union employees regarding these union policies;
 - i) Consider establishing dedicated positions for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander on union Committees of Management, Executive, Council, Congress, and other high-level union committees;
 - j) Ensuring there is a union official(s) who has responsibility in the union for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's issues and reports at each union executive;
 - k) Establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's committee and regular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's conference; and
 - l) Monitoring and reporting to the union executive annually on the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander at all levels within the union. In addition to this, unions should obtain regular qualitative feedback from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, executive members, council members, and delegates about the union culture, issues and challenges they face.

Peak council leadership and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

19. Ensure peak council leadership and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members by:
 - a) Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander member's issues are meaningfully addressed in industrial, growth and campaign priorities, actions and resources set at Union, TLC, ACTU Executive and Congress level;
 - b) Ensuring all unions have a representative on the ACTU Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's Committee and integrating the work of the Committee into other recognised priorities of the ACTU, including in education, industrial and campaigns.

Bargaining and industrial agenda

20. Ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members' issues are included in the bargaining and industrial agenda by:
 - a) Developing bargaining guide and claims that address the concerns of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members, including;
 - Standalone cultural leave.
 - payments for closures of businesses acknowledging 'Sorry Business/funerals'.
 - Standalone ceremony leave.
 - Standalone leave for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander days of significance.
 - Traditional Island adoption leave.
 - Recognition and recompense for additional cultural load. (NTEU Chart)
 - Flexible work arrangements, including 'working from home'.
 - Recognise Kinship structure for bereavement leave.
 - Paid language allowance.
 - Definition of 'Family' for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
 - Employment targets.
 - Recognise 'Indigeneity' as a genuine occupational classification.
 - Provisions for culturally safe workplace.
 - Removing barriers which unfairly discourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's participation.
 - b) Ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented on all bargaining committees; and
 - c) Develop and implement a bargaining checklist to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's claims are central and review achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander member's bargaining priorities by talking to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members.