

Sunday, 24 September 2023

ACTU welcomes full employment pledge

The ACTU welcomes today's employment white paper which sets out the government's commitment to full employment, where everyone who wants a job can find one, with the promotion of job security and strong sustainable wage growth as core objectives in the government's economic and fiscal strategy.

The paper acknowledges how critical safe, secure well-paid jobs are to an individual's wellbeing and financial security. We welcome the government's commitment to growing real wages and widening participation in our economy.

The paper takes a detailed look at barriers to secure work and workforce participation and sets out a roadmap on how to address those.

Casualisation and insecure work are rightly identified as areas that need tackling, along with minimum standards to ensure gig workers are not left vulnerable to exploitation and unsafe work. The paper also notes the concentration of people from a non-English speaking background, women, and young people who are now working in a sector with little protection.

The ACTU also welcomes the government's commitment to examine the drivers of insecure work as well the urgent need to address gender inequality to ensure that the benefits of work can be shared by all.

We also welcome the government's approach to making the definition of casual employment fairer and creating new pathways to permanency should the worker wish to take that option.

We welcome the additional support for TAFE and higher apprenticeships in the areas of care, digitisation and net zero.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"Full employment should be about getting to an economy where everyone who wants a job will be able to get a job and where the quality of jobs matter. We are pleased to see a government that is using every lever to achieve these goals.

"This report also shows us why tackling insecure work and the "Closing Loopholes Bill" is an essential part of achieving full employment and growing wages. Insecure, labour hire and gig economy workers need a fairer system and minimum standards. The rapid emergence of new, insecure forms of work needs intervention to stop living standards sliding backward.

"Too many workers in Australia have no paid sick leave, no paid annual leave, and no job security.

"We welcome the government's commitment to full employment and the critical importance of jobs being safe, secure and well paid."

ENDS

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