

Australia becomes world leader in protecting workers' rights and safety

The ACTU welcomes Australia becoming the first country in the Asia-Pacific region, and among the first globally, to ratify all 10 fundamental International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions following the ratification of two work health and safety Conventions in Geneva at a tripartite ceremony consisting of unions, employers and governments.

Last night's ratification of the ILO Convention No. 187 (Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health) and ILO Convention No. 191 (Safe and Healthy Working Environment [Consequential Amendments]) demonstrates the federal government's commitment to workplace safety and international labour standards.

This follows the 2022 decision by the ILO to elevate a safe and healthy working environment to a fundamental principle and right at work. Member countries of the ILO now have an obligation to promote and realise this right, alongside other core principles such as the right to freedom of association, the elimination of forced and child labour, and the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation.

Ratifying these conventions complements key measures already implemented by the Albanese Government to strengthen workers' health and safety, including the ban on engineered stone and the rollout of Respect@Work recommendations to prevent gender-based violence in the workplace.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"Last night, Australia committed to leading the world in ensuring every worker has the right to a safe and healthy workplace.

"Working people through their unions take action every day to make workplaces safer, and have long campaigned for Australia to align with international labour standards. Ratifying these international conventions signals to every Australian that the Albanese Government will protect our workplace rights, and demonstrates Australia's commitment to workers' health and safety.

"The new ratifications build on other important actions the federal government has taken to protect workers' health and safety, like protecting workers against deadly silica dust, making employers responsible for preventing sexual harassment and implementing all the Respect@Work recommendations.

"Every worker has a right to be safe at work and to return safely to their loved ones at the end of the day."

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