National education and union news



Women’s workforce participation at record levels

The participation rate of women in the Australian workforce has once again reached record highs of 63.4 per cent, according to recent ABS Labour Force statistics.

The figures from April 2025 show employment grew by 89,000 overall and the unemployment rate remained at 4.1 per cent, in seasonally adjusted terms.

The rise in employment was strongest for women workers, increasing by 65,000, including 42,000 full-time jobs.

The data indicates the federal government’s commitment to early childhood education and care and working women’s rights is helping more women to find and stay in secure jobs.

ACTU President Michele O’Neil said more women were in secure work than ever before and it was making a real difference to the lives of households and the Australian economy.

“Permanent work provides reliable hours, secure wages and the economic stability that workers rely on to plan for the future,” she said.

“The consistently strong growth in women’s workforce participation shows the importance of better access to early childhood education and care and improvements in workplace rights that support women.

“Women are still more likely to be in insecure and undervalued work, so there is still more important work to do to build on this progress and close gender gaps in employment and wages.”

Boost to Aussie wages on the way

Australian Unions have fought hard to win wage rises for lower paid workers throughout the country.

The ACTU has welcomed the Fair Work Commission's decision to award a wage rise of 3.5 percent for the three million Australian workers who rely on minimum and award wages.

From 1 July, this group of mostly part-time and lower-paid workers will receive a minimum weekly wage increase of $32, or an annual pay boost of $1,666 if working on a full-time basis.

Most workers directly impacted by the decision are employed in the accommodation and food services, community, care, retail, arts, administration, recreation and health care sectors.

The pay boost will help workers catch up on some of what they've lost over the past five years of the inflation fight and keeps real wages moving in the ongoing effort to rebuild living standards.

ACTU Secretary Sally McManus said: "Australian Unions welcome the decision of the Fair Work Commission to lift the wages of around three million workers by 3.5 per cent come the 1st July. Their decision supports the ACTU's argument that Australia's lowest paid workers should catch up with what was lost during the inflation spike."

"Achieving this 3.5 per cent increase was also only possible because the Albanese Labor Government delivered on their election promise and joined unions in arguing for a real wage increase," she continued.

"This decision delivers a 1.1 per cent real wage increase, one of the largest real wage increases the Fair Work Commission has awarded.

"This wage increase means those who are paid award wages will start to get ahead again, easing pressure on their weekly budgets and part of the stress that comes from having to cut back on the basics.

"With unions delivering strong real wage growth in collective agreements and now with real award wages growing, working people have turned the corner and are seeing decent real wage growth for the first time in more than a decade."

AEU welcomes new Albanese ministry

The Australian Education Union (AEU) has welcomed the announcement of the new Albanese ministry and particularly congratulates Ministers Jason Clare and Andrew Giles and newly appointed Jess Walsh on their ministerial portfolios.

AEU Federal President Correna Haythorpe said that the next term of government has much to achieve for public education to ensure that a high-quality preschool, school and TAFE education is accessible to all.

"With Minister Jason Clare and Minister Andrew Giles keeping their respective education and skills and training portfolios, the AEU is reassured that stability and strong leadership will allow the sectors to build on the foundational work already delivered by the Albanese Government," Ms Haythorpe said.

"We congratulate Minister Clare and Minister Giles on their reappointment and look forward to working with them on delivering on the Albanese Government's commitments for public schools and for TAFE.

"We welcome the appointment of Jess Walsh to the ministry in the early childhood education and care portfolio. We look forward to working with her on the many issues facing the early childhood education and care sector.

"On behalf of the AEU membership we pass on our sincere thanks to Minister Anne Aly for her outstanding contributions to early childhood education and care in the 47th Parliament and wish her well in her new portfolio.

"Across early education, schools and TAFE, the AEU looks forward to continuing to work with the Albanese Government in delivering a high-quality public education system for all Australians.

"We look forward to working with all ministers, members and senators in
the new Parliament as we strive for a world-class public education system, one where the teaching workforce are supported and professionally respected, and where teachers and students have the state-of-the-art teaching and learning facilities they need."

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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