

Workforce Policy

The transition to a low-emissions economy presents a unique opportunity to encourage a shift toward the creation of jobs that are socially and ecologically sustainable. Supporting a variety of education and training programmes is necessary to upskill the workforce and empower people to participate in this changing economy. During and beyond this shift, we must uphold workers' rights to secure and adequate income, to fair treatment and safety at work, and to be involved in workplace decision-making via workplace democracy and collective organising. At the same time, we must foster a working culture which recognises the fullness of people's lives, and restores balance between paid work, voluntary and care work, and leisure time.

Vision

Secure and meaningful work is available for everyone in innovative, environmentally sustainable, and socially responsible workplaces.

Values and Principles

Decisions relating to the workforce should uphold the following values and principles:

- *Honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi*: An equitable workforce supports Māori aspirations and upholds tino rangatiratanga across their working lives.
- *Ecological Wisdom*: All workplaces should actively support the transition to an environmentally sustainable economy.
- *Social Responsibility*: Working people have the right to fair pay for their work and deserve a fair share of the benefits of productivity growth.
- *Appropriate Decision-Making*: Working people, employers, and unions should be involved in making decisions about issues in their workplaces, the economy, and the environment. Workplace democracy and collective organisation are essential to address the inherent inequality of power between employers and employees.
- *Non-Violence*: Everyone has the right to fair treatment and safety at work, including freedom from forced labour and any form of discrimination.
- *Symbiosis*: Employers, working people, and unions enjoy equitable and beneficial relationships with each other. Working people are supported to grow in their roles, so everyone flourishes.
- *Work-life balance*: Our working culture should affirm the value of time outside of work, and enable sufficient time to enjoy and participate in their communities.
- *Valuing unpaid work*: The value of voluntary work and caring work should be recognised. The particular needs of working parents and caregivers should be acknowledged and supported.

Strategic Priorities

The Green Party's strategic goals include:

"Meaningful work will be available and people will have sufficient time to enjoy and participate in their communities."

Actions in this policy that work towards this goal include:

- Support people whose work has been affected by climate change (...). (1.3)
- Ensure pay equity, including by: Requiring pay transparency and pay-parity management in all sectors. (2.3.2)
- Ensure equitable employment opportunities, including by: Providing training and accessible information about opportunities to marginalised groups. (2.5.1)
- Support default union membership when people start a new job (i.e. making union membership opt-out rather than opt-in). (3.1.3)
- Progress towards a shorter standard working week. (2.4.3)
- Introduce legislation to ensure time in lieu or overtime pay is provided for hours worked in excess of contracted hours. (2.4.4)

Connected Policies

This policy relates to the creation of skilled jobs in [Business](#) sectors that are socially and ecologically sustainable, resilient to [Climate Change](#), and supported by infrastructure for economic development delivered through the [Government in the Economy](#). The Government can support [Livelihoods](#) beyond ensuring fair and adequate wages, including through policies that value unpaid work and supporting caregivers to participate in the workforce. Removing barriers to employment, such as in [Health](#), [Housing](#), and [Education](#), is important. Other policies that support working people include [Immigration](#), [Research, Science and Technology](#), [Digital](#), and [Accident Compensation](#).

Policy Positions

1. [Supporting a skilled workforce](#)

Issues

Working people today need a diverse and evolving set of skills, yet barriers to education and training hinder upskilling and advancement.

Actions

- 1.1. Support life-long training among employers and (potential) employees, especially low-income and marginalised workers, including by:
 - 1.1.1. Increasing resources for meaningful training of people currently out of work or underemployed, including through community education programmes and Trades Academies;
 - 1.1.2. Raising the current cap on apprentices, particularly those that are spread across several small business employers instead of just one;

- 1.1.3. Increasing support for organisations that train and mentor new low-carbon businesses and community enterprises; and
- 1.1.4. Requiring and resourcing employers to support workplace learning opportunities collectively initiated by employees.
- 1.2. Strengthen the connection between education, training, and employment by:
 - 1.2.1. Encouraging businesses to employ highly skilled post-graduates for research and development;
 - 1.2.2. Pursuing new and extended reciprocal working visa programs and qualification recognition with other countries; and
 - 1.2.3. Implementing better retraining and workplace accommodation programmes to ensure that valuable skills and knowledge are not lost when workers suffer permanent injuries.
- 1.3. Support people whose work has been affected by climate change, by:
 - 1.3.1. Consulting with working people, unions, and businesses on any emissions reduction policies likely to affect the ongoing viability of that sector;
 - 1.3.2. Providing free vocational training and redeployment opportunities for those in high-emission industries to enable a transition to climate-safe work;
 - 1.3.3. Ensuring access to redundancy compensation for working people adversely affected by climate change measures; and
 - 1.3.4. Strengthening human and labour rights to reduce inequitable vulnerability to the negative effects of climate change.

2. Fair wages and conditions

Issues

Economic and productivity growth in Aotearoa New Zealand has often not translated into fair wage increases, or secure jobs. Inequality is too high, and many New Zealanders face insecure work or harmful working conditions.

Actions

- 2.1. Expand workplace protections by:
 - 2.1.1. Improving protections for working people under 16 and establishing a minimum age for formal employment;
 - 2.1.2. Improving workplace protections for casual, fixed term, and piece-rate working people, including contractors and migrant workers;
 - 2.1.3. Ensuring that workers' rights are upheld when their work is mediated by digital technology, including by:
 - 2.1.3.1. Developing workers' rights protection to cover the 'gig economy' and those working from home; and
 - 2.1.3.2. Regulating the use of spyware by employers on devices used by employees;
 - 2.1.4. Ensuring full employment rights apply from the beginning of employment, for all working people, including by opposing trial periods;

- 2.1.5. Mandating flexible working arrangements, where practicable, including flexible hours, job sharing, remote work, and phased retirement; and
- 2.1.6. Establishing a minimum statutory entitlement to redundancy compensation, and ensuring insolvency laws give fair priority to redundancy pay and payment of accrued leave.
- 2.2. Ensure that wages enable people to cover their costs, including by:
 - 2.2.1. Increasing the minimum wage to a living wage.
- 2.3. Ensure pay equity, including by:
 - 2.3.1. Abolishing differential starting wages;
 - 2.3.2. Requiring pay transparency and pay-parity management in all sectors;
 - 2.3.3. Enabling collective fair pay agreements;
 - 2.3.4. Amending the Equal Pay Act to cover ethnicity, disability, gender identity, and age;
 - 2.3.5. Facilitating prompt resolution of pay equity claims; and
 - 2.3.6. Resourcing the community sector to advocate for fair wages and working conditions.
- 2.4. Ensure leave allowances enable working people to live fulfilling, balanced lives, by:
 - 2.4.1. Increase paid parental leave to a liveable income for a total of 15 months, with flexibility for both parents to take leave together during the early months of a child's life;
 - 2.4.2. Ensure working people have access to paid rest breaks during the working day, in all sectors;
 - 2.4.3. Progress towards a shorter standard working week;
 - 2.4.4. Introduce legislation to ensure time in lieu or overtime pay is provided for hours worked in excess of contracted hours;
 - 2.4.5. Increase paid annual leave to 5 weeks;
 - 2.4.6. Ensure bereavement leave entitlements are culturally appropriate for all New Zealanders and acknowledge the particular significance of tangihanga for Māori; and
 - 2.4.7. Introduce a carer's leave for those caring for dependent whānau.
- 2.5. Ensure equitable employment opportunities, including by:
 - 2.5.1. Providing training and accessible information about opportunities to marginalised groups;
 - 2.5.2. Encouraging recruitment policies to actively encourage Māori applicants, and require this in the public sector;
 - 2.5.3. Supporting Māori-led work-related initiatives;
 - 2.5.4. Requiring all workplaces to identify and address institutional racism in their recruitment, promotion, and retention practices.
 - 2.5.5. Providing legislative protection for people who are employed by labour hire agencies and preventing triangulated employment arrangements from being used to avoid workplace rights;

- 2.5.6. Developing and implementing a comprehensive, rights-based national disability employment strategy, which includes:
 - 2.5.6.1. Establishing targets for training, recruiting, retaining and promoting disabled employees;
 - 2.5.6.2. Evaluating recruitment to improve accessibility;
 - 2.5.6.3. Abolishing the minimum wage exemption and ending segregated employment practices;
 - 2.5.6.4. Implementing disability pay equity targets and pay gap reporting;
 - 2.5.6.5. Providing disability-aware workplaces in which disabled employees feel safe to disclose disability and access needs;
 - 2.5.6.6. Ensuring employers explain to new employees what workplace-specific and Government support is available for disability-related assistance; and
 - 2.5.6.7. Aiming to retain disabled employees and to equip us with the skills and experience needed for promotion including into senior leadership;
- 2.5.7. Incentivising employers to hire, retain, or retrain older workers, especially in sectors with skill shortages;
- 2.5.8. Providing wraparound support for marginalised people moving to rural areas to work; and
- 2.5.9. Increasing access to free, high-quality, inclusive early childhood and after-school care.
- 2.6. Ensure current protections are achieving their intended policy purpose by:
 - 2.6.1. Regularly reviewing workplace protections to identify gaps or loopholes, and address these promptly;
 - 2.6.2. Supporting the work of business organisations in communicating the value of good employment practices and the participation of businesses in 'employer of choice' programmes; and
 - 2.6.3. Sufficiently resourcing the Labour Inspectorate to investigate complaints, conduct targeted or intelligence-led audits, and enforce compliance.
- 2.7. Support workplace health and safety by:
 - 2.7.1. Ensuring high standards of workplace health and safety (including mental health and workload management) and environmental protection performance, recognising that these issues are often linked;
 - 2.7.2. Providing support and counselling services to workers whose work has caused them mental distress;
 - 2.7.3. Researching supportive workplace practices for people experiencing menopause;
 - 2.7.4. Working with key sectors which have high casual employment (especially horticulture, viticulture, tourism and hospitality) to establish best practice for employment and safety; and
 - 2.7.5. Protecting the wellbeing of sex workers, including by:
 - 2.7.5.1. Regulating sex work under civil law and including temporary migrant sex workers in that protection;

- 2.7.5.2. Protecting women and girls coerced into sex work;
 - 2.7.5.3. Criminalising people who have sex with sex workers aged under 18; and
 - 2.7.5.4. Establishing labour rights for independent contractors in the adult entertainment industry.
- 2.8. Attract and retain young people to live and work in rural communities, including by:
- 2.8.1. Digitally marketing the quality of life, natural surroundings and affordability of rural areas; and
 - 2.8.2. Investing in youth/rangatahi priorities within rural centres, including socialisation, skill development, work opportunities, entrepreneurship and recreation.

3. Collective workplace rights

Issues

Unions were disempowered in Aotearoa New Zealand through the economic changes of the 1990s, reducing the collective power and voice of working people.

Actions

- 3.1. Protect the right of working people to organise collectively to advance their interests by:
 - 3.1.1. Enabling the development of a collective voice for poorly or unrepresented sectors;
 - 3.1.2. Funding training of worker representatives;
 - 3.1.3. Supporting default union membership when people start a new job (i.e. making union membership opt-out rather than opt-in); and
 - 3.1.4. Expanding access rights for unions to worksites, including to promote union membership to non-members at key times.
- 3.2. Support workplace democracy and the rights of working people to be involved in decisions about their working lives, including by:
 - 3.2.1. Ensuring employment law promotes and facilitates collective bargaining, including Multi-Employer Collective Agreements;
 - 3.2.2. Upholding the right of working people and their unions to campaign for political, environmental, social and work-related industrial issues, including the right to strike in support of these; and
 - 3.2.3. Supporting an ongoing role for unions in developing workplace health and safety standards, especially for high-risk sectors.
- 3.3. Adopt best practice employment standards in the public sector, by:
 - 3.3.1. Introducing a framework for multi-employer public sector collective bargaining;
 - 3.3.2. Promoting work-life balance for public sector employees, including higher staffing levels in sectors where shift work is required or where the nature of the work creates a risk of burnout; and

- 3.3.3. Including just transition clauses in public service employment agreements and bottom-up participation of public service staff in organisational emission reduction efforts.