

# Workforce Policy

## Vision

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

## 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.

## Summary

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 peoples' lives, and restores balance between paid work, voluntary and care work, and leisure time.

## 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:

- Encourage a shift towards job creation in sectors that are socially and ecologically sustainable, including through resourcing local government to provide the infrastructure needed for regional economic development. (1.1)
- Provide support for people whose work has been affected by climate change (...) (1.4)
- Continue to promote and progress pay equity, and require pay transparency and pay-parity management in all sectors. (3.10)
- Continue to promote equitable employment opportunities, including by providing training and accessible information about opportunities to those groups. (3.11)
- Support default union membership when people start a new job (i.e. making union membership opt-out rather than opt-in). (4.4)
- Progress towards a shorter standard working week and introduce legislation to ensure time in lieu or overtime pay is provided for hours worked in excess of contracted hours. (5.3)

## Connected Policies

This policy is highly connected to the creation of skilled jobs in [Sustainable Business](#), and is supported by [Tertiary Education](#). It is also related to [Household Livelihoods](#), including valuing unpaid work, such as volunteering and caring, and providing for illness and [Accident Compensation](#).

## Policy Positions

### 1. Developing sustainable jobs

#### *Issues*

Our economy is currently not a sustainable one, and contributes to climate change. The transition to a low emissions economy, combined with ongoing technological disruption, will require active policies to protect the interests of working people and create sustainable jobs.

#### *Actions*

- 1.1. Encourage a shift towards job creation in sectors that are socially and ecologically sustainable, including through resourcing local government to provide the infrastructure needed for regional economic development (see our [Local Government Policy](#)).
- 1.2. Tax pollution and resource use to encourage sustainable and efficient use of resources, and incentivise investment in green industries (see our [Economic Policy](#)).

- 1.3. Ensure working people, unions, and businesses are consulted on any emissions reduction policies likely to affect the ongoing viability of that sector (see also our [Climate Change](#) Policy).
- 1.4. Provide support for people whose work has been affected by climate change, in the following ways:
  - 1.4.1. Free vocational training and redeployment opportunities for those in high-emission industries to enable a transition to climate-safe work;
  - 1.4.2. Access to redundancy compensation for working people adversely affected by climate change measures;
  - 1.4.3. Actively strengthen human and labour rights to reduce inequitable vulnerability to the negative effects of climate change; and
  - 1.4.4. Ensure that Government agencies model best practice in just transition clauses in public service employment agreements by supporting bottom-up participation of working people in organisational emission reduction efforts.
- 1.5. Ensure high standards of workplace health and safety (including mental health and workload management) and environmental protection performance, recognising that these issues are often linked.
- 1.6. Invest in new industries to support the sustainable economic transformation needed (see our [Sustainable Business](#) Policy).
- 1.7. Work with and support local economic development agencies to further improve coordination of local employment strategies including seasonal labour, accommodation affordability and locally relevant training.

## **2. [Supporting a skilled workforce](#)**

### *Issues*

Working people today need a complex set of skills, and barriers to education and training prevent upskilling. We believe everyone has the right to an education that will enable them to participate in the changing economy.

### *Actions*

- 2.1. Remove barriers to tertiary education (see our [Tertiary Education](#) Policy).
- 2.2. Increase resources for meaningful training of people currently out of work or underemployed, including through community education programmes.
- 2.3. Expand the self-employment start up payment, and increase support for organisations that train and mentor people establishing small businesses or community enterprises that will transition to a low-carbon economy (see our [Sustainable Business](#) Policy).
- 2.4. Support life-long training and apprenticeships among employers and (potential) employees, especially low-income workers, including through Trades Academies.
- 2.5. Raise the current cap on numbers of apprentices, particularly those that are spread across several small business employers instead of just one.

- 2.6. Encourage recruitment policies to actively encourage Māori applicants, and require this in the public sector.
- 2.7. Encourage businesses to employ highly skilled post-graduates for research and development.
- 2.8. Provide greater support for migrants and refugees to gain Aotearoa New Zealand credentials and employment in their chosen field (see also our [Immigration](#) Policy).
- 2.9. Ensure skills development and working conditions meet the needs of disabled people, including through improving accessibility standards (see also our [Disability](#) Policy).
- 2.10. Pursue new and extended reciprocal working visa programs with other states (see our [Overseas New Zealanders](#) Policy).
- 2.11. Implement better retraining and work-place accommodation programmes to ensure that valuable skills and knowledge are not lost when workers suffer permanent injuries.

### **3. 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 long hours.

#### *Actions*

- 3.1. Continue to support Māori-led businesses and work-related initiatives, especially initiatives focusing on regions with high levels of unemployment or enabling Māori into higher-paid areas of employment.
- 3.2. Progressively increase the minimum wage to a level that enables people to cover their costs, and abolish differential starting wages for youth and working people with disabilities.
- 3.3. Support employers to create fully accessible workplaces, to remove barriers to participation of disabled people in the workforce, and to participate in schemes designed to support disabled people into work (see our [Disability](#) Policy), including by providing financial assistance to employers of people for adaptations and to disabled employees for equipment and personal support.
- 3.4. Ensure the public sector and state funded community sector pays a living wage and requires service contractors to pay staff a living wage.
- 3.5. Ensure social support is fair and adequate for all families, regardless of their working situation.
- 3.6. Increase access to free, high-quality, inclusive, publicly funded early childhood and after school care, to reduce barriers for caregivers participating in the workforce.
- 3.7. Improve protections for working people under 16 and establish a minimum age for formal employment.
- 3.8. Improve workplace protections for casual, fixed term, and piece-rate working people, including contractors and migrant workers.

- 3.9. Ensure full employment rights apply from the beginning of employment, for all working people, including by opposing trial periods.
- 3.10. Continue to promote and progress pay equity, and require pay transparency and pay-parity management in all sectors.
- 3.11. Continue to promote equitable employment opportunities, including by providing training and accessible information about opportunities to those groups.
- 3.12. Ensure legislative protection for people who are employed by labour hire agencies and prevent triangulated employment arrangements from being used to avoid workplace rights.
- 3.13. Ensure current protections are achieving their intended policy purpose by requiring these be regularly reviewed to identify gaps or loopholes, and address these promptly.
- 3.14. Support the work of business organisations in communicating the value of good employment practices.
- 3.15. Support the participation of businesses in 'employer of choice' programmes.
- 3.16. Establish a minimum statutory entitlement to redundancy compensation, and ensure insolvency laws give fair priority to redundancy pay and payment of accrued leave.
- 3.17. Expand ACC to cover all health conditions, so that everyone has support for time off work to recover from illness as well as injury (see our [Accident Compensation](#) Policy).
- 3.18. Work with key sectors which have high casual employment (especially horticulture, viticulture, tourism and hospitality) to establish best practice for employment and safety.

#### **4. Collective workplace rights**

##### *Issues*

Unions were disempowered in Aotearoa New Zealand through the economic changes of the 1990s. The right of working people to organise collectively to advance their interests, must be protected. Unions provide a valuable role advocating for their members and promoting strong workplace protections and higher wages.

##### *Actions*

- 4.1. Ensure employment law promotes and facilitates collective bargaining, including Multi Employer Collective Agreements.
- 4.2. Support expanding the Fair Pay Agreements framework to contractors.
- 4.3. Support improved access rights for unions to worksites, including to promote union membership to non-members at key times such as shortly after beginning employment, or before and during collective agreement negotiations.
- 4.4. Support default union membership when people start a new job (i.e. making union membership opt-out rather than opt-in).
- 4.5. Ensure Labour Inspectors are resourced to investigate breaches of employment protections related to union access.
- 4.6. Support an ongoing role for unions in developing workplace health and safety standards, especially for high risk sectors.

- 4.7. Support workplace democracy and the rights of working people to be involved in decisions about their working lives.
- 4.8. Uphold 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.
- 4.9. Make it a statutory requirement for employers to appoint Union Learning Representatives to the workplace when requested by employees and ensure adequate resourcing is available to support the programme.
- 4.10. Enable the development of a collective voice for poorly or unrepresented sectors, including by funding training of worker representatives.

## **5. Valuing time outside of work**

### *Issues*

Paid work often crowds out the other things that people enjoy in life, such as family, friends, voluntary work, and leisure. Additional leave is required to enable working people to live more fulfilling, balanced lives.

### *Actions*

- 5.1. Increase paid parental leave to a liveable income for a total of 15 months, and allow leave to be used concurrently by both parents in the first three months after a child is born (see our [Household Livelihoods](#) Policy).
- 5.2. Ensure working people have access to paid rest breaks during the working day, in all sectors, recognising the health and safety importance of rest breaks regardless of the type of work.
- 5.3. Progress towards a shorter standard working week and introduce legislation to ensure time in lieu or overtime pay is provided for hours worked in excess of contracted hours.
- 5.4. Progressively increase paid annual leave to 5 weeks.
- 5.5. Ensure bereavement leave entitlements are culturally appropriate for all New Zealanders and acknowledge the particular significance of tangihanga for Māori.
- 5.6. Ensure family violence leave continues to be available for victims of domestic violence to leave an abusive relationship.
- 5.7. Introduce a carer's leave for those caring for dependent whānau.

## **6. Public sector employment relations**

### *Issues*

People in public-interest jobs, many of which are employed by the public sector, are often underpaid and overworked. The Crown can and should set best practice employment standards through its role as Aotearoa New Zealand's largest employer.

### *Actions*

- 6.1. Introduce a new framework for multi-employer public sector collective bargaining, promoting a more consistent and fair approach to employment protections across the public sector.
- 6.2. Ensure public sector employees are meaningfully involved in decisions about restructuring that would affect them and their work.
- 6.3. Adopt robust policies for workplace non-discrimination in hiring and promotion across the broader public sector.
- 6.4. Ensure all workplaces are fully accessible for disabled employees.
- 6.5. Promote 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.
- 6.6. Ensure state funding for the community sector is sufficient to promote fair wages and safe staffing levels, acknowledging the social value of this work and a lack of other funding sources.