

Tuesday, 15 May 2012

Dave Oliver elected new ACTU Secretary; pledges to renew fight for workers' rights and secure jobs

Dave Oliver has been elected as the new ACTU Secretary at the union movement's Congress in Sydney today. Mr Oliver was elected unopposed to replace Jeff Lawrence, who did not seek re-nomination after five years in the position.

Mr Oliver, who comes to the ACTU after five years as National Secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, said he was honoured to be entrusted with representing working Australians and their families.

"Australian workers face a multitude of daily pressures to earn enough to meet their cost of living expenses, balance their working and family lives, and plan for their future," Mr Oliver said.

"Workers face many challenges at the moment, as a result of both the increasing resistance by employer groups to accept that workers in this country have rights, alongside the two-speed economy and the growth of insecure work.

"I am determined to combat the increasingly hostile attack on workers' rights by employers.

"I've never been one to put up the white flag and I am not about to start now. In fact, I am buoyed by the passion across the union movement to ensure that the rights we fought so hard for only a few years ago are maintained and in some areas strengthened.

"I intend to work with all unions, big and small, to put our agenda into action, grow the movement and achieve positive change for workers and their families."

Mr Oliver will formally take office on 24 May and said he looked forward to elevating the role of the ACTU as a high-profile campaigning organisation. He said he would bring a constructive approach to working with employers and the Government to address the challenges facing industries struggling against the high Australian dollar.

"It is in all our interests to work together to ensure the longevity of industries like manufacturing and tourism," he said.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said she looked forward to working with Mr Oliver to advance the union movement's agenda to help improve the lives of Australian workers.

"I look forward to working with Dave to continue our agenda and confront the growing attack on workers' rights," Ms Kearney said.

Mr Oliver paid tribute to outgoing Secretary Jeff Lawrence as a man of decency who enjoyed universal respect.

"The union movement is in good shape and totally united, thanks to Jeff," he said.

Media contact:

Rebecca Tucker (03) 9664 7379 or 0408 031 269; rtucker@actu.org.au

