

Wednesday, 14 June 2023

Government ratifies ILO Conventions to eliminate violence and harassment at work and child labour

The Albanese Government has ratified two ILO (International Labour Organisation) Conventions at the International Labour Organisation during its annual ILO Conference.

The ILO Convention No. 190 (Violence and Harassment) and ILO Convention No. 138 (Minimum Age) were ratified overnight in Geneva at a tripartite ceremony. Minister for Skills and Training Brendan O'Connor was joined at the event during the ILO conference by ACTU President Michele O'Neil and employer representative Natalie Heazlewood.

The ILO Violence and Harassment Convention provides a comprehensive framework for Governments and employers to prevent, address and reduce the risks of violence and harassment at work. The ACTU played a key role in the negotiations for the new Convention over the 2018 and 2019 International Labour Conferences and has campaigned for Australia to ratify it since the Convention was adopted in 2019.

Ratification of Convention 190 was a recommendation of the Respect@Work Report. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced his plan to ratify ILO Convention 190 at the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) World Congress hosted by the Australian Council of Trade Unions in Melbourne in November.

Now ratified, the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention will support the full extension of the 10 days paid family and domestic violence leave entitlement to all 12 million employees in Australia by September 2024.

The ILO Minimum Age Convention is one of the ten ILO Conventions classified as 'fundamental', and a key international instrument in the fight to eliminate child labour and forced labour.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"All working people deserve to work in a safe environment, free from violence and harassment. The landmark ILO Convention 190 recognises every worker's right to be free from all forms of violence and harassment at work, including gender-based violence and harassment. We commend the Albanese Government for taking this important step to making our workplaces safer for women and all workers."

"Australian Unions work everyday to make workplaces safer and played a key role in the development of this ground-breaking Convention, and campaigning for its implementation. After years of inaction by the Morrison Government, we congratulate the Albanese Government on ratifying this key international labour standard.

"Ratification of this Convention means that paid family and domestic violence leave will be extended to all workers in Australia – which will save lives and ensure that workers impacted by family and domestic violence don't have to choose between their safety and their job.

“We also welcome the Albanese Government’s ratification of the ILO Minimum Age Convention, which is long overdue. Recent child labour law breaches by Muffin Break, Red Rooster, Cold Rock show the importance of strong standards that protect children from exploitation.

“Australian unions have a long and proud history of campaigning for the rights of workers in Australia and around the world. Ratification of these two important ILO Conventions is Australia playing its part in upholding and implementing important international standards for workers.”

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Media: Gareth Hathway 0499 878 782