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Australian Unions call for 2 million new secure jobs and halving of job insecurity to rebuild economy

The peak body for working people in Australia has released a comprehensive blueprint for rebuilding the economy and restoring jobs in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

The ACTU's eight-point plan has called for the creation of two million new secure jobs and the halving of job insecurity to be set as a target for rebuilding the Australian economy. The plan aims to harness the spirit of cooperation between Australian governments, business, and civil society that has guided our response to the crisis to ensure we rebuild in a way that delivers a better and fairer Australia.

COVID-19 has revealed fault-lines in our economy that must be addressed as we look to rebuild.

Thirty years of neoliberal trickle-down economics have led to rising inequality, an erosion of the social safety-net, record-low wage growth, and too many people in insecure employment or without enough work.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"We need to rebuild the Australian economy and society and make jobs more secure. Setting a goal of creating two million new secure jobs and halving job insecurity in Australia can drive an economy wide rebuilding effort and lift the living standards of millions of working people.

"These 8 guiding principles will help shape a rebuilding effort that puts people in more secure jobs, gets wage growth going again, ensures Australia is making what we need, putting our national interests above any vested corporate interests and investing in our communities.

"We look forward to working with governments, employers and communities to develop the programs Australia needs to rebuild and make jobs more secure.

"We cannot allow the economy to go back to the way it was before: rising inequality, record low wage growth, a gutted social safety-net and public services, and too many people in insecure employment or without enough work.

"If a disaster destroys your house, you don't rebuild in all the old cracks and flaws – you rebuild with improvements, you fix the things you know were wrong and you make your home even better than it was before.

"We must rebuild our economy and our communities so they work for all Australians."

Our eight-point principles for the post-pandemic rebuild are:

1. Improve the quality and security of jobs by creating 2 million new permanent jobs and halving the number of insecure jobs.

Ending forced casualisation, outsourcing, offshoring, continuous rolling contracts and over-use of labour hire.

2. Lift wages and living standards

Money in workers' pockets drives business, creates jobs and lifts living standards.

3. Strengthen and invest in public and community services that are our first line of defence against 'shocks' like COVID-19, bushfires and drought

Strong healthy communities and strong public services create a strong Australia.

4. Support nation-building projects that create decent jobs and set Australia up for a brighter future

Building for the future provides jobs, training and incomes today and tomorrow. Investment in infrastructure, manufacturing and service industries.

5. Education and training

Rebuilding our domestic skills and training system with public investments in schools, TAFE and higher education will ensure working people are able to meet the demands of work in the post-COVID world.

6. Deal with the crisis of climate change

Reduce emissions, improve energy efficiency, restore the environment. Support existing industries and create new jobs in industries embracing new energy technologies.

7. Improve social, health and economic outcomes for people and communities that experience disadvantage

Improve and increase public and community services and income support payments. Tax reform needs to be targeted at ensuring corporations are paying their fair share for the services and support every Australian needs.

8. Embrace industry policy and 'Australian made'

If we can make it or provide it here and create jobs here then we should make it or provide it here. Trade must deliver for our national interest, deals that give away our sovereignty, jobs, and undermine household incomes should not feature in our post-pandemic future.

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