



INVEST IN SECURE LOCAL JOBS

OUR
SA OUR
future



Fairer Workplaces for All South Australians

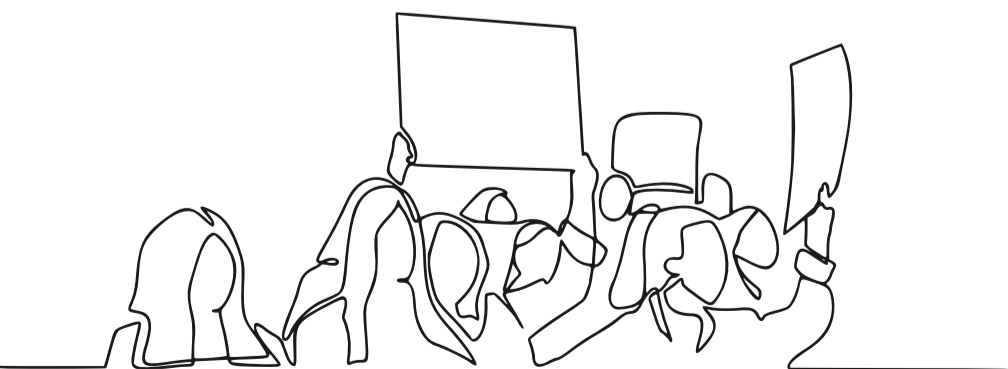
SA 
UNIONS
STRENGTH IN UNITY
~ SINCE 1884 ~

South Australian workers deserve secure jobs that allow them to care for their families and plan for the future. As the nature of work evolves, we can't afford for our workplace rights to fall behind.

In this cost-of-living crisis, we need industrial laws that help working families stay afloat. As new hazards emerge, we need laws that keep modern workplaces safe. When discrimination pushes down pay and conditions, **we need laws that make work fairer for everyone.**

Workers are proposing effective and practical updates to make South Australian jobs safer, fairer, and more secure. Simple reforms could help South Australians catch up to workers in other jurisdictions and make our state the best place in Australia to work.

South Australia has a proud history of nation-leading reforms, but SA workers are missing out on workplace rights enjoyed by most Australians.



DON'T LEAVE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WORKERS BEHIND

The Commonwealth Government recently took decisive action to 'close the loopholes' in Australia's industrial relations system. These federal reforms were designed to ensure that workers in modern workplaces have the rights they need while preventing practices that intentionally undercut pay and conditions.

Across the country, millions of workers are already feeling the benefits: higher wages, more secure employment, and a better work-life balance. Crucially, these reforms are also actively shrinking the gender pay gap by addressing systemic undervaluation.

However, thousands of South Australian workers are being left in the dust. Because the federal 'closing loopholes' changes only apply to those covered by the national industrial system, a huge gap has opened. For those covered by South Australia's state-based system, the loopholes remain wide open.

Over 134,000

South Australian workers risk being left behind.

Source: State Public Sector 122,644 OCPSE 2025 Report
Local Government~11,700 ABS June 2025 Combined Coverage~134,344 Total

While the rest of the country moves forward, South Australian workplace laws remain stagnant. The State Government must fast-track the best reforms from the national system to bridge this gap and ensure every local worker is protected by the same high standards.

SAME JOB, SAME PAY

Workers doing the same job should receive the same pay. In the South Australian system, employers can still get around the rates of pay which they have agreed with their staff. Employers can bring in workers through a labour hire firm and pay them less to do exactly the same work, because 'technically' they work for a different employer.

This is a loophole which exists to undercut fair wages and conditions.

In our public libraries, for example, labour hire workers do the same job as council employees while earning up to \$18 less per hour. This two-tiered workforce undermines hard-won conditions and degrades the quality and stability of public services.



Labour hire librarian, paid \$18 less an hour.

The State Government must introduce "Same Job, Same Pay" laws to keep our public services strong and protect workers covered by South Australian workplace laws from being exploited through the labour hire loophole.

RIGHT TO DISCONNECT

The rise of digital communication has fundamentally blurred the line between work and home.

In the modern era, work is no longer confined to a physical office or a set roster; instead, many South Australians find themselves 'tethered' to their roles via smartphones and laptops. This constant connectivity means workers are often bombarded with work-related emails, calls, and texts well after they have finished for the day.



This inability to escape the stresses of work has a profound impact on well-being. It prevents the mental ‘unplugging’ necessary for recovery, directly contributing to increased rates of burnout, chronic stress, and mental ill health. For many, the expectation to remain ‘on call’ 24/7 erodes personal time and devalues the time meant for rest and family.

South Australians deserve the right to truly clock off. We must ensure that workers can spend quality time with their loved ones without being forced to monitor or reply to unreasonable after-hours communication.

The State Government must deliver a legal right for South Australians to disconnect and spend time with their loved ones without being forced to monitor and reply to unreasonable after-hours communication from work.

LIMIT FIXED-TERM CONTRACTS

Many South Australians are still employed under rolling fixed-term contracts, even when they’ve worked in the same role for years. When they’re faced with the never-ending insecurity of one temporary job after another, workers can’t plan for their future. With the threat of non-renewal always in the background, workers on back-to-back contracts are left vulnerable to exploitation and afraid to enforce their workplace rights.

The State Government must limit the use of fixed-term contracts to deliver permanent jobs for more South Australians.

CLOSE THE GENDER PAY GAP

South Australians shouldn’t be valued less just because of their gender. On average, women are paid \$190 less than men per week in South Australia, adding up to \$9,412 less per year. A major driver of this gap is the historical undervaluation of jobs where most workers are women. Outdated attitudes which discounted complex and demanding jobs as low-value ‘women’s work’ are still infecting minimum rates of pay in the South Australian system.

SA women are paid **\$190** a week **less** than men.

The State Government must review South Australian industrial awards to root out historic gender undervaluation and ensure rates of pay reflect the true value of work.

CLOSE THE PARENTAL LEAVE GAP

While the federal “Closing Loopholes” reforms have strengthened protections for many, a significant gap remains for South Australians covered by the state industrial system. For these workers, access to parental leave can still be hindered by technicalities and outdated eligibility requirements that fail to reflect the reality of modern families.

Insecure work and back-to-back contracts often mean that parents are denied leave simply because of how their employment is structured, rather than the length of their service. These loopholes force many to choose between their career and caring for a new child, disproportionately impacting women and contributing to long-term financial insecurity.



State-system workers often face more rigid barriers to entry for parental leave compared to those in the national system, creating a two-tiered standard of support for South Australian parents.

The State Government must increase parental leave entitlements to ensure that they are secure, accessible, and inclusive, providing every South Australian parent with the stability they need to support their growing family.

KEEP SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S WORKFORCE COMPETITIVE

At a time when talented workers enjoy more mobility than ever before, South Australia needs to be leading the nation in how we look after workers and help them get ahead.

Where other states and territories have already forged ahead with reforms which boost local jobs and keep workers safe, South Australia needs to catch up.

We must also seize the opportunity to lead by listening to workers and introducing Australia-first reforms which would make South Australia the best place in the country to work.

DELIVER PAID REPRODUCTIVE LEAVE

South Australians at every stage of their working lives need time to address symptoms and issues arising from their reproductive health. Young workers are forced to chew up their leave balances or go without pay to pursue IVF or fertility treatments. Workers experiencing menopause are forced to leave work early with lower retirement savings thanks to a lack of workplace support. Some workers push themselves to burnout working through severe pain from menstruation or endometriosis. Others need time for preventive screenings and procedures, including prostate screenings and vasectomies.

The State Government must deliver access to 10 days of paid leave for South Australians to manage their reproductive health.


Queensland delivered 10 days of paid reproductive leave in 2024.

VALUE FOR MONEY IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

The State Government spends around \$8.5 billion each year to purchase goods and services. It needs to leverage this extraordinary buying power to help all South Australians prosper.

When the Government spends taxpayer money to procure goods and services, it should prioritise businesses that deliver safe, secure, and well-paid jobs here in South Australia.

Government grants and contracts can't just go to the lowest bidder when the true cost of a low price is South Australians suffering in unsafe, insecure, and low-paid jobs. Our tender processes must not be a race to the bottom where businesses who do the right thing are undercut by firms that exploit and harm workers.



Bad businesses shouldn't be in the running for the public money - STOP THE RACE TO THE BOTTOM.

Only ethical businesses should be in the running for Government support. Tenderers should be able to demonstrate a good track record of following employment and safety laws. They should prioritise secure jobs and avoid sham contracting and labour hire arrangements.

They should allow workers to participate actively in their unions and work cooperatively with union delegates. **They should support apprentices and trainees to develop their skills.** They should be committed to workplace gender equality and supporting workers from diverse backgrounds. To stamp out exploitation further along the supply chain, tenderers should ensure that any subcontractors also meet these standards.

The State Government must establish a Secure Local Jobs Code which sets high standards for companies which want taxpayer money and backs businesses that actually deliver for South Australians.

SUPPORT INJURED GIG WORKERS

Plunging injured workers into poverty is an unacceptable practice in modern Australia. A third of workers employed on gig platforms have been injured at work, but these workers receive no support to help them recover or provide for their families.

More than half of gig workers suffer from work-related stress, anxiety, and mental health issues. More than half feel pressured to take risks just to make ends meet or protect their jobs from ‘deactivation’. These workers cannot be left to carry the burden of workplace injury alone.

Plunging injured workers into poverty is an unacceptable practice in modern Australia. In South Australia, our workers’ compensation and rehabilitation system completely excludes workers employed on gig platforms.

A third of workers employed on gig platforms have been injured at work. 55 per cent have experienced threatening or abusive behaviour. 52 per cent suffer from work-related stress, anxiety, and mental health issues. 51 per cent feel pressured to rush and take risks just to make ends meet or

protect their jobs from ‘deactivation’. Since 2017, at least 18 food delivery workers have been killed on the job.

Injured gig workers receive no support to help them provide for their families or recover. The families of gig workers who are killed at work cannot access compensation, instead having to pursue lengthy test cases in civil court. Gig workers and their families cannot be left to carry the burden of workplace injury and death alone.

The State Government must extend the coverage of ReturnToWorkSA to protect workers employed on gig platforms.

Gig Work Injuries **Stats**

33% have been **injured** at work.

52% suffer from work-related stress, anxiety, and **mental health issues.**

55% have experienced **threatening or abusive** behaviour.

51% were pressured to rush or take risks to prevent ‘deactivation’.

18 food delivery workers have been **killed on the job** since 2017.



Queensland, Victoria, and the ACT have already extended workers’ compensation to gig workers.

PAY YOUNG WORKERS A LIVING WAGE

Adult workers should be paid adult wages. In South Australia, workers aged 18 to 21 can be paid up to 30% less than older colleagues for doing exactly the same job. These young adults face the same costs for rent, groceries, and bills, yet are expected to survive on 70% of the minimum wage.

The State Government must remove junior rates of pay from South Australian industrial awards and the State Wage Case.

Apprentices and trainees are the backbone of our future workforce, yet many are forced to live below the poverty line. Low wages are a major barrier to completion, leading to high dropout rates in critical trades.

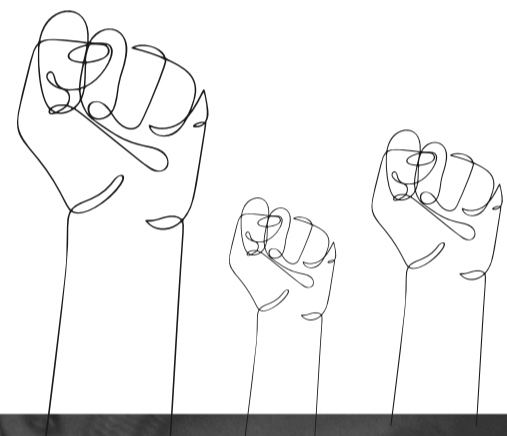
The State Government must lift apprentice and trainee pay rates to ensure they are a viable pathway for all South Australians. Boosting these rates is an investment in our state's skills base and ensures that 'learning a trade' doesn't mean 'living in hardship'.



**INVEST IN
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**Learning a trade
shouldn't mean
living in hardship.**

SA UNIONS' RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. DON'T LEAVE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN WORKERS BEHIND

South Australia must adopt the federal 'Closing Loopholes' workplace reforms. We cannot allow a two-tiered system where over 130,000 South Australian Workers are left with fewer rights than those in the national system.

Same Job, Same Pay

Ban the labour hire loophole. If a worker does the same job as a permanent employee, they must receive the same pay - No more undercutting wages through outsourcing.

Right to Disconnect

Give workers the legal power to switch off. Workers deserve to reclaim their personal time without the pressure to monitor and reply to emails or calls after hours.

Limit Fix-Term Contracts

Stop the cycle of rolling insecurity. Limit back-to-back temporary contracts to ensure workers can actually plan for their future with permanent, secure jobs.

Close the Gender Pay Gap

Mandate award reviews to root out the historic undervaluation of 'women's work'. It is time pay rates reflected the true skill and complexity of every role.

Close the Parental Leave Gap

Eliminate technical barriers that strip parents of their leave. Every South Australian parent deserves secure, accessible support regardless of their employment structure.

2. KEEP SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S WORKFORCE COMPETITIVE

To win the race for talent, South Australia must lead the nation, not trail it. We must implement modern standards that make our state the best place in the country to work.

Value for Money in Public Procurement

Enforce a Secure Local Jobs Code. Taxpayer dollars should only flow to ethical businesses that prove they provide safe, secure, and well-paid local jobs.

Support Injured Gig Workers

Extend ReturnToWorkSA protections to the gig economy. No worker should be forced to carry the total financial burden of a workplace injury alone.

Pay Young Workers a Living Wage

Treat adults as adults. Abolish discriminatory junior pay rates for those over 18 and lift apprentice wages to ensure learning a trade is a viable career path.

Deliver Paid Reproductive Leave

Support health at every stage. Provide 10 days of paid reproductive health leave for workers to manage reproductive health, including IVF, menopause, and preventive screenings.