



JUSTICE FOR WORKERS

ENSURING SAFE, FAIR AND EQUITABLE WORKPLACES

The Greens (WA) believe that workplace laws must be fair and protect all workers from unjust treatment and unsafe conditions.

BACKGROUND

The Greens (WA) view work as something which should be rewarding, enriching and the basis of our families', communities' and state's welfare and prosperity. We believe that workplace laws should be fair and protect all workers from unjust treatment and unsafe conditions. Industrial laws should facilitate industrial harmony and uphold the rights of workers to organise collectively to negotiate fair pay and conditions.

The Greens believe that every worker has a right to a safe and healthy workplace and that all workers should expect to return home from work safe and well.

INITIATIVES

> INTRODUCING THE CRIME OF INDUSTRIAL MANSLAUGHTER

Based on statistics from the WA Department of Commerce and WorkSafe WA, on average every 19 days one person is fatally injured at a workplace.¹

Every workplace death is a tragedy that also results in a lifetime legacy for loved ones left behind. Under existing laws, when an employer is responsible for an employee's death, the penalties are woefully inadequate.

The Greens (WA) proposed amendments to the Criminal Code seek to introduce the crime of industrial manslaughter, recognising the seriousness of corporations who wilfully fail to ensure that their workplaces are safe for workers. When introduced, culpable employers can potentially be held responsible for workers' deaths.

> ADDRESSING THE GENDER PAY GAP

Western Australia has the largest gender pay gap of any state or territory in Australia. As of May 2016, it sits at 23.9 per cent compared to 16.2 per cent nationally.²

The Greens (WA) will reintroduce the Industrial Relations (Equal Remuneration) Amendment Bill, which seeks to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1979 to allow the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission to hear pay equity cases and make enforceable equal remuneration orders so that employees to whom the order will apply can receive equal remuneration for work of equal value. The bill also changes one of the principal objects of the act to ensure there is equal remuneration rather than just work to promote it, and to include reference to equal remuneration for all employees for work of equal or comparable value rather than of just equal value.

> SUPPORTING THE STATE'S SAFETY WATCHDOG

On average, 4,906 workers are being hurt each year to the extent that they require 60 or more days off work.³

WorkSafe, the state's safety watchdog has been neglected by successive governments. At its current level, funding provided to the agency is entirely inadequate. In their 2015 Budget, the State Liberal government approved cuts to WorkSafe across 4 years amounting to a total of \$4.1 million.

The Greens (WA) are entirely opposed to these cuts, would reverse the decision to remove this vital funding, and would review funding to see that WorkSafe is able to ensure a high level of industry safety, and has enough well trained inspectors and trainers to carry out this work. This includes reinstating all 17 positions that disappeared as a result of these cuts. Furthermore, The Greens (WA) support an overall increase in funding to WorkSafe WA for the provision of more safety inspectors and trainers across all industries and in particular ensuring that WorkSafe has high levels of industry expertise within its inspectorate.

> SAVING YOUR WEEKEND

Around 15% of workers in WA benefit from penalty rates under State legislation, many of these are young people or are underemployed.⁴

Workers in tourism and hospitality provide an unmatched level of vibrancy to our State culture, and are integral to a growing and diverse economy.

The Greens (WA) will advocate for amendments to the *Industrial Relations Act 1979* to enshrine late night, weekend, and public holiday penalty rates in legislation, protecting them from any adverse decisions made by the WA Industrial Relations Commission.

¹ WA Department of Commerce (2016) *Key OSH Statistics*.

² Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2016)

³ Above n.1.

⁴ WA Department of Commerce (2014) *State Industrial Relations Coverage*