

**Know your  
rights at work**



**join your union**

## **Why join a union?**

Employers have historically resisted giving workers things like rest breaks, lunch rooms, reasonable hours and decent wages. On many occasions workers have had to withdraw their labour and strike for lengthy periods to win these basic conditions.

This is because workers and their employers do not have the same interests. Workers want shorter hours, higher pay, and better conditions. We want our work to be less boring, dangerous, and less destructive to the environment. We want more control over how we produce goods and provide services. We want meaningful work that contributes to our communities and world.

Our employers, in contrast, want us to work longer, harder, faster, and cheaper. They want fewer safety and environmental regulations and they demand absolute control over all decisions, work rosters and actions in the workplace.

## **What is a union?**

A union is an organisation which brings together workers to fight for their collective interests. In a workplace this might mean fighting for better wages and conditions.

When workers work together in a collective they have much improved bargaining power. The members of a union support each other so that we don't have to face a problem or negotiate with the boss on our own. When workers stick together like this we have a much better chance of getting a better deal. The more union members the better the deal.

# 10 good reasons to join your union:

**1.** People who belong to unions have better wages and conditions than non-union members. Union members on average earn 15% more than non-union members! This works out on average to \$118 per week. Union members are also more likely to get overtime rates.

**2.** Unionised workplaces have better health and safety conditions and are more likely to have elected health and safety reps who can legally monitor health and safety at work. This means you are less likely to be injured at work.

**3.** Unions have a long and proud history of defending the rights of women. Anti-discrimination laws, paid maternity leave and family leave was won by unions who continue to fight for improved conditions for working women.

**4.** Overtime rates, annual leave, rostered days off, redundancy agreements and long service leave payments are all conditions that were won by unions. Unions are responsible for winning every single improvement in the rights and conditions of workers. Employers do not just hand over entitlements.

**5.** Unions support on the job education and training for workers. Union members are much more likely to have agreements with employers to pay for courses and provide time off for workers to attend them.

**6.** Unions have fought for better laws to protect low paid workers including outworkers. Unions like UNITE are currently fighting against low pay in the form of youth wages and for a boost to the minimum wage.

**7.** Unions members are more secure in their jobs. If you are a member of a union you are more likely to be in a position to force your boss to put you on full time. You are also less likely to be sacked unfairly because your boss knows you will have back up.

**8.** In tough economic times, employers will try to cut jobs and wages and increase productivity. It is unions that resist this trend to ensure workers are not burdened with economic losses.

**9.** Unions help to break down barriers in workplaces. They unite workers of different ages, genders, races and backgrounds so people don't feel isolated and fearful of employers. Union members are less likely to be discriminated against at work.

**10.** Unions support important community campaigns. Unions fight against student poverty, for the environment, for women's rights, Aboriginal rights and for a better life for all workers.

**Fight back. Join your union today!**

**Despite the myths it has not been generous bosses that have handed over better wages and conditions to workers. Everything we have today is the direct result of unionised workers fighting for a better deal.**

## ***Stronger together!***

The easiest way to stand up for each other in our workplaces and on campus and the easiest way to improve our conditions is to join a union. That is why employers and governments fight so hard, and spend so much money, to keep unions out of their workplaces and off their campuses.

Unionised workers generally have better pay and conditions. More pay equals fewer hours at work and more free time. Union workplaces are safer and have less harassment and discrimination. This is because a union gives workers the power to make workplace decisions. The less we let our employers make all of the decisions, the better our lives and communities will be.

# If you work in fast food or retail.... **join UNITE!**

UNITE is a fighting union for fast food and retail workers in Victoria. The fast food and retail industries are a source of employment for thousands of young people. Employment in these industries usually means casual hours, low pay, workplace bullying, and unsafe work practices.

This growing sector is mostly dominated by a handful of greedy corporations who are determined to drive down production costs in order to boost profits. One way that they reduce production costs is by employing young people and paying them low wages. Another way is by employing most of their staff on a casual basis. This saves them money by not having to pay out holiday pay, sick pay and all of the other benefits permanent staff enjoy.

It doesn't have to be this way! The creation of low paid casual jobs in the fast food and retail industries is only a relatively recent development. The reason other industries have been able to achieve better wages and conditions is by building fighting unions and bargaining collectively to force these greedy companies to pay higher wages, improve conditions and to provide workers with some security in their lives.

The time for workers in fast food and retail to have their own fighting union is long overdue. We urge all workers in the fast food and retail sectors in Victoria to join UNITE.

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Membership fees:

HOURS (per week)	WEEKLY FEES
0 - 10	\$2
10 - 20	\$4
20 +	\$6