



PSA MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 5 March, 2015

NSW GOVERNMENT ACCUSED OF BREACHING INTERNATIONAL WAGE STANDARDS

NSW public servants have lodged a formal complaint with the International Labour Organisation over the government's attack on fundamental workers' rights.

The Public Service Association, the ACTU and the CPSU, have joined forces - calling on the ILO to investigate the conduct of the NSW Government.

PSA General Secretary Anne Gardiner said that laws introduced by the government between 2011 and 2014 breached international standards affecting the state's nearly 400,000 public servants.

"Governments are in the unique position of being both an employer and a legislator. The NSW Government has abused this power in order to deny NSW public servants the basic rights other workers in Australia take for granted," Ms Gardiner said.

"Public sector employees don't have the right to collectively bargain for wage increases above a limit determined by their employer, or to secure entitlements like redundancy pay in their Award."

"You can judge the character of a government by how it treats its own workforce. Instead of being the gold standard this government has shown contempt for its employees."

ACTU President Ged Kearney said Australia was a member of the ILO and had ratified Collective Bargaining conventions.

"We have been forced to make this complaint because the actions of the NSW Government do not comply with Australia's international obligations," Ms Kearney said.

These laws not only hurt public sector workers, but the entire job market.

"When the biggest employer in the state passes laws that suppress wages, it's no surprise salaries across the state stagnate as well," Ms Gardiner said.

"It is bad faith in the extreme for the NSW Government to use its role as legislator to strip away its obligations to its workforce as an employer," Ms Gardiner said.

WHEN: 11am, Thursday 5 March

WHERE: Back of Parliament House, Hospital Road.

WHO: Anne Gardiner - PSA General Secretary, Ged Kearney - ACTU President, Karen Batt - CPSU Federal Secretary.

KEY FACTS:

1. Complaint lodged jointly by the Public Service Association of NSW, the CPSU and the ACTU calling on the International Labour Organisation to investigate the conduct of the NSW Government.
2. Under the *Industrial Relations Amendment (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Act 2011*, NSW public sector workers are denied the right to collectively bargain for a wage increase above a limit determined by their employer and to secure basic entitlements like redundancy pay in their Award.
3. The regime put in place by the NSW Government is in breach of Australia's legally binding commitment under Convention 87 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, and Convention 98 – Right to Organise and Collectively Bargain. These conventions are ratified by 153 and 164 Countries.
4. Alongside conventions on forced and child labour, discrimination and equal pay, these conventions form the fundamental rights at work that the international community is committed to upholding.