

WE NEED ACTION ON JOBS

Unemployment remains high in New Zealand. For the first time since 1992 it is higher than in Australia.

The Government is not doing enough to assist those worst hit by the recession. These workers have lost their jobs through no fault of their own.

The Government says that the worst is over in the recession. But this is not true for many workers. Times are really tough. And it is particularly hard if you are out of work.

The legacy of the global financial crisis is high unemployment for a large group of workers.

The CTU is calling on the Government to take action to support the unemployed. Investing now will benefit our economy in the long term.

Without a job, workers stop spending money on other goods and services, which causes more job losses as shops and businesses see their earnings drop.



Here are 10 things we think the Government needs to do to keep New Zealand working:

1. Stop public sector job cuts – Government action has gone way beyond ‘capping’ or reducing staff by natural attrition.
2. Maintain Community Max and Youth Opportunities. These are due to be phased out from mid-2010 and gone completely by the end of the year. This is crazy! It means that these schemes will be removed when unemployment is higher than when they were introduced.
3. Increase skills investment subsidies. These are payable by Work & Income to support ongoing training of workers who have come off unemployment benefit to help match them with a suitable employer.
4. In addition to more support for skills, expanded assistance is needed for those already made redundant – for example: - more flexibility on benefit entitlements and stand-down periods; - more Government investment in relocation and housing assistance; - expanding the range of tailored support schemes for redundant workers (e.g. CV assistance, careers advice, mentoring, training options).
5. Continue the Job Support Scheme (9-day fortnight) until no longer required.
6. The Government should strengthen the requirements around governmental procurement choices to give priority to New Zealand suppliers.
7. Action should be taken on the Public Advisory Group Report on Redundancy – particularly the introduction of statutory redundancy pay and notice periods. The Government should legislate to achieve this.
8. More investment in green jobs such as clean rivers, home insulation, retro-fitting buildings.
9. Employment plans need to be produced for groups most adversely affected by the current recession – for example: - Maori - Pacific - Youth - Specific geographic areas hardest hit (e.g. Northland).
10. Don't blame the unemployed. Already we are seeing signs that the Government wants to single out beneficiaries for criticism. This has to stop.