

New models of building worker organisation

Sam Huggard, August 2016 CTU Organising Conference

International video panel

- Michelle Chen, New York based writer and journalist
 - Interview here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6xqj6vYJt4>
- David Rolf, President, SEIU Local 775
 - Interview here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rXbwxkoT60k>
- Chris Walton, CEO, Professionals Australia
 - Interview here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ZLjS72I7Io>

Some reflections

- When debating about the 80 per cent not in unions, need to remember, there are no short cuts.
- Power analysis. Needed for any new models of association, including digital
- Together: Lowering the threshold for access to unions on its own isn't (of course) enough. Key problem: we didn't ask workers what they want.
- Values-based association of people sympathetic to us (can be done from the centre) and robust organising plans to build power (has to be done in the field).
- Case v cause advocacy. When wanting to build 'social movement', don't assume unions are up there with Greenpeace et al

Some reflections

- Unless the centre has resources and a deployable team, association models best based in unions themselves, not the centre?
 - Issues expertise
 - Capacity in the field
 - Ability to mobilise to scale, at speed, if the time is right
 - Sense of ownership
- Financial renewal question remains

Group discussion

Two questions:

- In the industries your union is active, what sorts of workers would benefit from a new model of association?
- Thinking about these workers, put David Rolf's three criteria to the test. How would you go about setting up a pilot, that takes these criteria into account.
 - powerful enough to create real economic change for workers
 - can reach scale
 - economically self-sustaining