

The National-led Government rushed through a raft of changes to laws that impact working people.

- lost bargaining power
- lost job security
- lost protections
- less paid leave and, for some, less pay while on leave
- the rules are making it easier to move away from secure employment towards contracting and other insecure arrangements

These aren't abstract changes.

They affect people at work, in our pay packets and in our lives.

THE BIG LOSSES

1: LESS BARGAINING POWER

Fair Pay Agreements were scrapped.

What workers lost: a new way to lift standards across low-paid industries and stop employers competing by driving conditions down.

What would change in your whole industry if workers could bargain together for better minimum standards?

2: LESS JOB SECURITY

It is easier for employers to use 90-day trials.

The Government extended 90-day trials to all employers.

The rules around dismissal have also changed.

The remedies available to some workers have changed and the 30-day rule for new employees covered by collective agreements has been removed.

Have you changed jobs since 2023? What difference in your job security have you seen?

3: LESS PAY EQUITY

The Government changed the rules while pay equity claims were active, making it near-impossible to succeed on a claim, while also cancelling 33 active claims.

What workers lost: a pathway to challenge systemic undervaluation of women's work and progress that workers had spent years organising to achieve.

Is your industry or occupation female-dominated? What would pay equity mean for you?

4: LESS PAID LEAVE AND A MORE COMPLICATED SYSTEM

The Holidays Act is being replaced.

For workers with irregular or changing hours or pay, or regular full-time workers working less than 5 days a week, that can mean less money, and getting less for leave.

Leave is not just a number on a payslip. It's time you get back to live your life.

Do your hours change from week to week? Have you been told about these changes?

5: LOWER WAGES

The minimum wage has not kept pace with the cost of living.

Minimum wage increases in 2024, 2025 and 2026 were below inflation, this means a pay cut in real terms for our lowest paid.

Is your pay keeping up with the cost of living?

6: WEAKER HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTECTIONS

Health and safety law is changing the framework around how businesses manage workplace risks.

What workers need to watch: whether the changes make it harder to raise concerns about risks that aren't immediately life-threatening but still affect their health and safety.

What are the health and safety issues in your workplace that workers are worried about?

7: WEAKER PROTECTION FOR SOME WORKERS

The line between employee and contractor is easier to cross.

That matters, because contractors don't have the same employment rights as employees.

What workers risk losing: the security and protections that come with being an employee.

Are you an employee? Or are you expected to do the same as an employee while being called a contractor?

8: LESS ENFORCEMENT

Rights only matter if they're enforced. WorkSafe's funding has been cut and its focus has been changed.

If something unsafe is happening at work, do you feel confident your employer will fix it?

PUT IT ALL TOGETHER

These individual changes matter but there is a much bigger pattern. Taken together, these changes push working life away from secure employment and collective power towards a more casualised, individualised workforce.

That matters because when workers have less security, they have less power to speak up. When workers have less bargaining power, it is harder to improve wages and conditions.

As we have seen in the past, when workers are treated as individuals competing with each other, it becomes easier for employers to drive conditions down.

THIS IS ABOUT MORE THAN ONE GOVERNMENT

These changes didn't happen by accident. They are political choices about whose interests should come first. Workers can organise for something different:

- better pay
- secure jobs
- fair treatment
- safe workplaces
- pay equity
- time to live, not just work
- a fairer deal for working people.

The question isn't:
What have working people lost?

It's:
What are we going to win back?