

Media Alert & Release (embargoed until midday Sat march 8th)

Fri 7th March 2008

Tasmanian Unions looking to the future at Family Fun Day to mark 8 hour day and International Womens Day

Unions Tasmania is holding a Family Fun Day on Parliament House lawns, Hobart tomorrow (Sat March 8th) to celebrate both the 8 hour working day and International Womens Day. The day will have a special focus this year on the struggle for work/family balance with unions competing in a speed nappy changing competition, a "get the kids to school on time" obstacle course, a "bake off" as well as the traditional inter-union tug of war.

Union Tasmania Secretary Simon Cocker will lay out some key elements in the Union roadmap for the future concerning the rolling back of Workchoices, workers compensation, global warming and paid maternity leave.

He will be joined by Marie Coleman, Spokesperson for the National Foundation for Australian Women calling on both state and Federal governments to have a co-ordinated approach and meet defined targets in relation to women's health, education and workforce participation.

Unions Tasmania Secretary, Simon Cocker said:

"Australia and America are now the only western countries without universal access to paid maternity leave. The United Kingdom has got it. New Zealand has recently increased its paid maternity leave to fourteen weeks and included self-employed parents. It can be done and it's good for productivity."

"It is time for the union movement to speak louder on the issue of global warming. While the cost of reducing emissions will be high, the cost of not doing so will be even higher. The ACTU calls for concerted national and international effort and investment targeting for reduction of emissions. We believe it can be done in a way that carries potential for sustained economic growth and better jobs."

"The Clayton report provided a way forward for fixing some of the unfairness still in the workers compensation system in Tasmania. We must maintain public pressure on the government to look favourably on many aspects of this report."

"These are vital issues for workers who are injured at work. A police officer shot in the in of duty should never have to face the possibility of step downs in salary." said Mr Cocker

Spokesperson for the National Foundation for Australian Women, Ms Marie Coleman said:

"A roadmap is needed to clearly articulate the Rudd government's policy objectives and desired outcomes for women. We need a clearly plan, with defined targets for women's issues in Australia"

"Government has already committed large amounts of money to address women's issues, but at the national level there is no clear articulation across Ministerial responsibilities of all the policies intended to deal with ending discrimination and violence against women. There is no national plan for Australian women."

"This needs to be a combined effort with State and Federal Governments working together to agree on goals in terms of women's health, education, pay, superannuation savings and workforce participation and then working to meet those targets across the whole spectrum of government."

“The government needs to encourage state governments to collect data and meet defined targets in relation to women’s health, education and workforce participation. “

“There is not enough data about women’s issues to properly inform action and state and Federal governments need to act on this problem.”

“A classic example of the lack of adequate data is that here in Tasmania the female participation rate is much lower than most other states and because of the way statistics are put together no-one can tell us why. “

“If we want all the benefits of women working, increased productivity, women with money in the bank and superannuation savings we need to know why women are joining the workforce here in Tasmania at a lesser rate than elsewhere in the country.”

“Without data, there can be no roadmap. The first step on the National Women’s Agenda should be to collect the data to tell us where we are – then we can move on.”

Media inquiries to: Simon Cocker 0419402377 & Marie Coleman, NFAW on 0414 483 067,

Who: Simon Cocker, Secretary of Unions Tasmania,
Marie Coleman, Spokesperson for the National Foundation for Australian Women

What: speeches at Unions Tasmania 8 hour day Family Fun Day

Where: Parliament House Lawns, Hobart

When: 11.40 am, Saturday March 8th - Speeches
(activities begin at 10.30 and finish at 2.30)