

Work and Employment Policy

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Definitions

"Work" includes paid work and unpaid work.

"Employment" means paid work and includes self-employment.

"Unemployment" means the lack of availability of suitable paid work.

"Full employment" means a situation where there is sufficient paid work for all those who require it.

Introduction

Work is one of the ways we add meaning to our lives, be it the work we do for money, or the work we do raising children, caring for others or contributing to our communities. Work is about dignity, about being valued and valuing each other. Work is essential for our self-esteem, physical, mental and spiritual health and a sense of participating in society.

Key Principles

1. People need to work and participate purposefully in society.
2. People need time to relax, play, and pursue leisure activities and personal interests.
3. Unproductive or insecure employment and forced labour are incompatible with the fulfilment of basic human needs.
4. In recognition of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Green Party supports Māori initiatives to create ecologically sustainable employment for Māori and affirms the need for equitable access to employment.
5. Full employment with dignity and a living income for those in employment is achievable; the Greens reject the idea that economic stability requires either a significant level of unemployment or a low-level of protection for those in employment.
6. Unpaid and voluntary work is as vital to strong communities as paid work.
7. Sustainable employment can only arise from an ecologically sustainable economy that uses resources sparingly and is rich in meaningful work.
8. Small business and community enterprise need to be supported by central and local government to create employment locally.

Specific Policy Points

1. Improve our understanding of work and initiate a far reaching public dialogue and discussion on present practices, attitudes and values about work, by:
 - a. Improving the ways in which we measure paid and unpaid work and

- unemployment to obtain a more accurate picture than presently exists.
 - b. Establishing a high level commission into the future of work (integrating the development of vision and policy with respect to work (including paid and unpaid), income support and taxation).
 - c. Ensuring Government policy recognises the contribution of, both, paid and unpaid work to strong communities and supports people's striving for balanced and varied lives.
- 2. Working towards a shorter working week; including the establishment of a taskforce to:
 - a. investigate the economic and social effects of a 35-hour working week in New Zealand; and
 - b. address barriers to a 35-hour working week, including the issues of over- and under-employment in a transition process, and suggest strategies to move those earning below average wages to a living wage.
- 3. Work towards full employment and a progressive conversion of the economy to sustainable forms of employment by:
 - a. Encouraging a shift in the emphasis of overall government policy towards supporting job creation in local and regional projects that are socially and ecologically sustainable.
 - b. Starting the shift to an organic nation, an energy efficient nation, and a waste free New Zealand, all of which will create more local employment.
 - c. Shifting tax from work and enterprise onto pollution and wasted resources in order to encourage employment while reducing resource use.
 - d. Effective Government support and funding for community-based employment creation.
 - e. Supporting the community sector and small businesses as sources of locally appropriate, meaningful and sustainable paid employment.
 - f. Working with and support local government economic development agencies to further improve coordination of local employment strategies including seasonal labour, accommodation affordability and locally relevant training.
 - g. Working with key sectors with high casual employment use (especially horticulture, viticulture, tourism and hospitality etc.) to establish best practice of employment and safety.
- 4. Work towards equitable employment for all (see [Industrial Relations](#) Policy), through:
 - a. Supporting employment relations policies that encourage collective bargaining, to ensure transparency of wage setting.
 - b. Reviewing legislation and amending it as needed in order to promote and ensure equal employment opportunities and pay equity.
 - c. Retaining the minimum wage for youth and trainee rates at the adult minimum wage, to remove the possibility of exploiting young workers.
 - d. Setting the minimum wage at no less than 66% of the average wage, to alleviate the unnecessary subsidising of the earnings of low-income workers through targeted income support assistance such as Family Assistance and Accommodation Supplement.
 - e. Effective equal employment opportunities programmes, training and support to encourage women, Māori, disabled and other statistically lower-paid groups into higher-paid areas of employment.
 - f. Encouraging research to help identify discriminatory workplace and

- institutional practises.
- g. Addressing social policies and practices that cause women to carry the long-term economic risks caused by the traditional gender role division of labour.
5. Foster new employment by supporting active employment programmes, including:
 - a. Financial support for the appropriate retraining of long-term unemployed.
 - b. Ensure appropriate funding /training subsidies for staff training focused on low-income workers and small businesses.
 - c. Support for the work of employment resource centres, small business support groups and similar organisations that work to train and support people going into self employment, small business, co- operative and community-owned enterprise.
 - d. Assist motivated people with entrepreneurial talent on income support to set up their own small business by:
 - i. Increasing access to the Enterprise Allowance at adequate levels and in all geographic localities.
 - ii. Supporting and expanding the availability of employment resource centres, small business support groups and similar organisations which work to train, mentor and support people going into self-employment, small business, co-operative and community-owned enterprise.
 - e. Promote life long training and apprenticeships among employers and (potential) employees.
 - f. Raise the current cap on age and numbers of apprentices, particularly those that are spread across several small business employers instead of just one.
 - g. Investigating a mechanism, possibly similar to the artist's model, for income support during the later stages of developing production models, software etc. This would have an agreed time limit.
 - h. Resourcing the Ministry of Social Development's Work and Income Service (Work and Income) to help workers find and retain appropriate employment, and to inform workers of relevant employment and human rights legislation.
 - i. Expanding vocational guidance services so that unemployed people can be given proper, individually tailored assistance in finding appropriate employment and training opportunities from the time they first register as a jobseeker.
 - j. Providing professional bodies with incentives and funding support to help migrants and refugees reach the standards needed to practise their professions.
 - k. Ensuring greater availability of bridging courses for immigrants in professions for which Aotearoa/New Zealand has need, and of student loans for those seeking professional registration here.
 - l. Encouraging the use of practical supervision of those with internationally recognised qualifications as an available route to registration in place of one-off pencil-and-paper tests.
 6. Ensure that voluntary work is not used to replace paid work, and that those participating in voluntary work are valued in their role by:
 - a. Ensuring Government policy across all departments recognizes the

- contribution of volunteers, and foster a culture which promotes and supports volunteering as a key part of community life.
- b. Recognising cultural differences in definitions of 'volunteer'.
 - c. Ensuring that voluntary work is not used to replace paid work, and that those participating in voluntary work are valued in their role by:
 - i. Acknowledging that people doing voluntary work are contributing to the community, and supporting people to who participate in voluntary work.
 - ii. Opposing 'workfare' or compulsory schemes as these are counterproductive and destroy real jobs.
 - iii. Retaining and annually reviewing the Ministry of Social Development's Participation Allowance paid to all beneficiaries who carry out a minimum number of hours of approved "activity in the community" with organisations undertaking work of value to the community or the environment.
 - d. Increasing and sustaining funding to the local and national organisations which support and promote volunteering.
 - e. Acknowledging the essential and valuable work of parents and caregivers, and ensuring they are supported and have opportunities for education in their role.
 - f. Providing quality education and training that meets the specific needs of the voluntary sector.