

Workers Struggles: Asia, Australia and the Pacific

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The World Socialist Web Site invites workers and other readers to contribute to this regular feature.

Filipino migrant workers at the medical parts manufacturer TaiDoc Technology Corporation in New Taipei held their fourth protest in four months against exploitation and union-busting outside the Ministry of Labor on Monday. Their newly formed union, the TaiDoc Technology Labor Union (TTLU), said it will strike to pressure management to meet its demands, including reinstating dismissed union officials.

A workers' representative told the media that the company dismissed all union officials the day after the union's third protest over the firing of its chair. Afterward, management offered to reinstate the six officials on the condition that they quit the union, an offer they rejected. They were forced out of their dormitories the following day.

The Filipino workers are also fighting against exploitation. Migrant workers are denied fundamental freedom of movement, subjected to curfews and roll calls. Workers are made to check in at the dormitory by uploading images of themselves, and have restrictions on leaving the dormitories after curfew. If they stay out, they are punished with 30 days of cleaning duty in the factory. They are threatened with termination and repatriation otherwise.

Media reported that as with other migrant workers, TaiDoc employees are bound to the broker system and pay 1,500 NT to 1,800 NT (\$US57.82) to brokers. No services are offered in return. They must pay 18,000 NT when renewing contracts or pay more than 50,000 NT from a placement fee after being sent back to the Philippines. To leave the company, they are required to pay one month's salary. Pregnant migrant workers are sent back to their country immediately. To take leave, workers must deposit one month's salary.

A TTLU representative said the union now has close to 30 members, all Filipino workers, adding that reinstating the dismissed officials is a prerequisite for negotiations. He said the timing of an actual walkout has yet to be decided, noting the company would "definitely fire everyone who goes on strike."

India: Tamil Nadu school nutritious meal and Anganwadi workers maintain state-wide protest[subhead]

Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation workers protested at Freedom Park in Bangalore on February 19 to demand 38 months' outstanding wages from 2020, and for the new contract pending from 2024. Protesters included drivers, conductors, mechanics and timekeepers.

The Joint Action Committee of KSRTC unions previously threatened an indefinite strike on February 19 but postponed it for 10 days, telling workers that KSRTC and the government had asked for time to fulfill their earlier commitments and had called them to the table for talks.

The unions called a major strike for wages last year, but it was stopped

when the government enacted the draconian Essential Services Maintenance Act, exposing strikers to heavy fines and disciplinary action.

Bangladeshi hotel and restaurant workers protest job cuts and demand minimum wage

Hotel and restaurant workers protested in Dhaka on Sunday outside the National Press Club. They were demanding immediate implementation of the government-announced minimum wage and an end to mass job cuts ahead of Ramadan, the Muslim religious festival. The rally was organised by the Minimum Wage and Labour Law Implementation Sangram Parishad Sangram Parishad (Action Committee) for hotel and restaurant workers.

A spokesman at the rally said that the interim government of Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus announced a monthly minimum wage of 13,050 taka (\$US106) last year but that many employers refused to implement it. He alleged that employers have begun dismissing workers in large numbers in a cost-cutting exercise before Ramadan, which starts in the third week of February. He said the organisation had carried out protest actions across most districts as part of a nationwide campaign against the layoffs.

The protest concluded with a march through central Dhaka streets, highlighting growing anger among low-paid service workers facing rising living costs, insecure employment and the government's continued inaction in defending basic labour rights.

Sri Lanka: Government doctors' protest enters fourth week

About 20,000 Government Medical Officers Association (GMOA) doctors are continuing protests which began on January 24 with a 48-hour strike. The industrial action was in response to the Dissanayake government's refusal to address long-standing grievances. GMOA members are fighting the government's failure to implement agreements reached in earlier negotiations.

Their campaign includes refusing to direct patients to private pharmacies and laboratories, boycotting external clinics organised by politicians, declining work in hospital units lacking adequate support staff, and not covering duties assigned to specialists.

Doctors want revisions to the Disturbance, Attendance and Transport (DAT) allowance, proper provision of medical officer allowances, conversion of additional duty payments into a fixed allowance like those for other public sector employees, and resolution of long-standing problems related to research allowances.

The GMOA extended industrial action and decided not to assign doctors to newly opened hospital wards lacking approved staff numbers and not examining patients in settings without adequate safety and privacy safeguards. Specialist doctors have also withdrawn from certain coverage duties.

Medical Officers of Health (MOH) withdrew from officially submitting a range of public health data and reports to the Health Ministry and relevant institutions starting on February 18. This includes daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly reports on communicable diseases, dengue cases, immunisation data, maternal and child health, school health and other public health indicators.

The GMOA has warned that industrial action could be intensified if the government continues to avoid implementing agreed measures within a defined timeframe.

Victoria: 10,000 health workers strike for higher wages

In a last-minute attempt to head off a mass walkout by Victoria's 10,000 public health support workers at 80 health facilities on Wednesday, the Allan state Labor government has offered a higher pay increase agreement. While the Health Workers Union (HWU) said the offer could be acceptable, its members went ahead with the strike. Over 1,000 HWU members rallied at the official opening of the Footscray Hospital in Melbourne which was to have been attended by Victorian Premier Jacinta Allan.

The HWU has allowed negotiations to drag on for over a year, using the weak excuse accusing that the health minister was not making herself available for negotiations. Workers overwhelmingly rejected the government's earlier pay offer of annual 3.3 percent increases over three years, conditional to agreeing to give up key workplace protections and entitlements. The official inflation rate is 3.8 percent, meaning the offer was a real pay cut.

HWU members, including hospital cooks, cleaners, orderlies, security guards, ward clerks, allied health assistants, theatre technicians and phlebotomists, began industrial action in early December, which included wide-ranging work bans across the state including ad hoc 20-minute walkouts and protests outside health facilities.

Workers were seeking a pay increase of 12 percent over two years. The government's latest offer is 12 percent over two and a half years. The HWU said it would recommend the deal to its members.

Queensland health professionals continue industrial action against proposed cuts

On February 13, 200 public health medical imaging department workers stopped work and rallied outside major hospitals across Queensland in opposition to proposed cuts in the state Liberal-National Party government's proposed enterprise agreement.

The United Workers Union (UWU) members, who include radiographers, sonographers, radiology sonographers, and medical imaging assistants, stopped work between 1pm and 3pm, impacting MRI, X-ray, and ultrasound services at 14 hospitals from Cairns to the Gold Coast. The union has accused the government of refusing to negotiate, which has resulted in members taking 120 days of rolling industrial action over several months.

The union claimed the proposed enterprise agreement would cut

\$30,000, or 25 percent, from the annual salary of its nuclear medicine specialists. The cut has already seen 6 out of 75 of these essential workers exit Queensland Health as of January 2026 putting further strain on the state's capacity to deliver essential cancer treatment and medical imaging services.

These cuts are causing significant disruptions to hospital services. The ongoing dispute raises concerns about the future availability of essential diagnostic services and the retention of skilled health workers in the public sector.

Crown Melbourne casino workers strike again

About 2,500 United Workers (UWU) members employed at the Crown Melbourne casino, in Melbourne, walked off the job for 24 hours at midnight on Monday, coinciding with Chinese Lunar New Year. Employees from over 50 of Crown's departments, including table games, security, catering and cleaning services, stopped work, and protested outside the casino.

The action followed a walkout on New Year's Eve and a 12-hour strike on February 14 in opposition to an enterprise agreement proposed by management in December. It was aimed at cutting wages and conditions by introducing a two-tier wage system that would have impacted over 4,500 workers and cut base rates for new hires by between 16 and 32 percent.

The UWU proposed an historically low 2 percent wage increase if the two-tier system was scrapped. Management responded by demanding the union accept a wage freeze.

The two-tier system, already implemented at Crown Sydney, is part of Crown's broader cost-cutting strategy championed by Blackstone Inc., its US-based owner which acquired the company in 2022. Workers want the two-tier wage system abandoned and wage increases that keep pace with the cost-of-living.

Winc distribution warehouse workers in Queensland walk out for pay parity

About 30 United Workers Union (UWU) members at Winc Australia's office equipment distribution warehouse in Brisbane walked out and protested outside state parliament in Brisbane on February 12. They want the same wage rates as colleagues in New South Wales and Victoria.

The UWU said its Queensland distribution members, including at Bunnings, ALDI and Target, are paid less than workers in other states for the same work. According to the latest consumer price index, Brisbane has a 5.2 percent annual inflation rate, the highest of any Australian state capital.

Winc workers said they will refuse to accept another wage offer from the company that sees them paid approximately 11 percent less than Winc workers in Sydney doing the same job.

Dynelec electricians in New South Wales remain on strike

A dozen striking Electrical Trades Union (ETU) members employed at Dynelec's electrical equipment assembly plant at Unanderra, an industrial

suburb of Wollongong, south of Sydney, are maintaining a strike and picket they began on January 23 outside the factory. The highly skilled workers, who build electrical switchboards for major mining and construction projects across New South Wales, are in dispute with Dynelec over its proposed enterprise agreement.

Workers want an 18 percent pay rise over three years which they say will give them pay parity with workers in the industry doing similar work. The union said that they were initially offered 11.5 percent over the same term, but on February 11 management provocatively dropped the offer to 10.5 percent.

As well as a “fair” pay increases, workers want basic safety allowances, proper support for apprentices and improved carers leave. Their current agreement expired on September 30, 2025.

Aurizon Coal workers in New South Wales begin industrial action for pay rise

Following nine months of failed negotiations for a new enterprise agreement with Aurizon Coal, Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) members have begun industrial action seeking a pay rise and improved conditions. Workers at Aurizon facilities in Quirindi, Muswellbrook, Newcastle and Wollongong imposed bans on weekend overtime, using personal devices for work, data entries and refueling work vehicles.

Workers want a 20 percent wage increase in the first year of the new agreement and 5 percent in the second. This is to compensate for below-inflation pay increases (real pay cuts) negotiated by the union in their current agreement. Other demands are for improved access to annual leave, paying out sick leave when workers leave the company and protections against casualisation, automation and AI.

Sky diving instructors at Experience Co strike again over cuts to pay and conditions

Following 12 months of hostile enterprise agreement negotiations, Australian Workers Union (AWU) members employed as skydiving instructors by tourism giant Experience Co stopped work on February 13. The company has eight sites, which are in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. AWU members first walked off the job in November in opposition to cuts to pay and conditions proposed in the company’s new work agreement.

The AWU claimed parts of the agreement included cuts of between \$20,000 and \$100,000 per year, and a reduction to the instructors’ minimum wage from \$57,000 to \$49,000 through a new low “per jump” piece-rate. The union said the cuts would undermine the safety of every customer and instructor. Experience Co employs over 1,000 workers and 130 skydivers across Australia.



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