

# Workers Struggles: Asia and Australia

3 April 2026

## Sri Lankan doctors protest over transfer irregularities

Doctors across Sri Lanka conducted a token strike from 8.00 a.m. on March 31, protesting illegal and arbitrary transfer decisions issued by the Ministry of Health.

The Government Medical Officers Association (GMOA) stated that the ministry had released transfer lists for 2026—including post-intern placements and difficult service appointments—without the approval of the transfer board and outside established procedures.

The association also alleged that the number of difficult service positions had been reduced from 393 to 265 without scientific basis or stakeholder agreement, warning that the move could worsen doctor shortages in rural hospitals.

The GMOA further claimed that the eligibility period to apply for transfers from difficult stations had been extended from one to two years without proper consultation, creating unfair conditions for doctors currently serving in those areas.

GMOA confirmed that essential and vulnerable services would remain operational during the strike. Maternity hospitals, children's hospitals, the Apeksha (Cancer) Hospital, kidney care units, tri forces hospitals, and the National Institute of Mental Health were exempt. Emergency services across the island continued uninterrupted.

This latest action comes amid ongoing protests that began on January 24 with a 48-hour strike, following the government's refusal to resolve long-standing grievances and implement previously agreed upon commitments.

## India: Telangana ASHA workers demand increased minimum wage

ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers protested in Nalkonda district on March 30, demanding 18,000 rupees (\$193) as a minimum wage. The workers said they were working long hours but were not paid enough or on time. They also demanded the government provide job security and reduce their workloads. The workers have been fighting all over the country for various demands, including increased wages, but none of the state governments have met their demands.

## Gujarat: Sanitation workers strike in Kheda pilgrimage centre

Sanitation workers of Kheda Municipality went on strike on March

29. The workers were demanding wages in line with the sixth pay commission. The workers were striking in the pilgrimage centre against the government, with brooms in their hands, seeking the support of visiting pilgrims.

## Kashmir: Contract cooks in Srinagar's Handwara town schools protest for better wages and equal pay

Contract cooks in Handwara schools protested for better wages and against pay disparity on April 1. The cooks, are paid just 30 rupees per day (\$0.30), far below the minimum wage. The workers said that they do the same work as the permanent workers but are paid less and face dire conditions.

## Himachal Pradesh: Outsourced workers protest in Shimla's Chaura Maidan

Many outsourced workers protested in Chaura Maidan on March 28 against job insecurity and low wages. They attempted to march to the state assembly but were stopped by the police midway. Despite working in the same role for more than 15 to 20 years, the workers said they remained as outsourced workers in the state. They also demanded equal pay for equal work.

## IT workers at DXC Technology in Victoria strike

On March 31, almost 200 members of Professionals Australia (APESMA) in Melbourne commenced a series of work bans prior to initiating a 24-hour strike on Thursday. DXC's software engineers, systems engineers, developers, infrastructure specialists, database administrators, technical consultants, information security analysts and operational support analysts are seeking improved wages and conditions in a new enterprise agreement (EA).

A ballot of APESMA members late last month saw a large majority of workers at DXC vote for strike action and wide-ranging bans, including restrictions on overtime, standby and call-out work, as well as bans on servicing customer requests and attending meetings.

Negotiations for the new EA have been going on for 14 months. According to the union, DXC's previously proposals have been rejected by workers because they have come with no wage increases

and cuts to existing conditions.

APESMA says some workers haven't had a wage rise in five years and are no longer willing to accept real wage cuts. The union is reportedly asking for a 4 percent increase backdated to July 1, 2025, which will in all likelihood mean another wage cut relative to inflation.

### **Victorian disability support workers protest**

On March 25, 100 disability workers in the Health and Community Services Union (HACSU) protested outside Victorian Labor Premier Jacinta Allen's Bendigo office against government cuts to subsidies supporting 11 disability group homes, their 75 residents, and 150 support workers.

The protesting HACSU members and thousands of others are in a long-running dispute with the Victorian state Labor government over wages and conditions in a new enterprise agreement.

In January and February 2026, more than 10,000 public sector health workers across Victoria, including orderlies, cleaners, kitchen staff, security guards, theatre technicians, and administration staff, walked off the job to oppose real wage cuts that are part of an effort by state and federal Labor governments to impose financial austerity on the working class.

Until recently, the Victorian state government provided a subsidy to support disability providers in running previously state-run group homes. This has now ended and, according to the HACSU, the Labor government has made no plans or contingencies to provide for the estimated thousands of affected disability support workers, participants and their families.

HACSU has called on the government to extend funding as the providers begin to cut roles, eliminate worker provisions and close Supported Independent Living homes, where some participants have lived for decades.

### **Medical scientists in Victoria strike against wage cuts**

Victoria's public sector medical scientists went on strike Wednesday and marched to the state parliament. It is their first strike in a decade.

The Medical Scientists Association of Victoria (MSAV) is seeking a meagre annual wage rise of "at least" 5 percent, as well as improvement in gender equity, improved rostering, higher qualification allowances, properly funded professional development, flexible leave and better long service leave.

### **Mobile crane workers at Prince Engineering in Portland, Victoria strike**

About 50 workers employed at Prince Engineering in Portland, Victoria went on strike for four hours on Wednesday. The striking

workers, covered by the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU), are taking action in support of their wage and condition demands in a new enterprise agreement. The CFMEU says the workers have been subjected to a wage freeze for several years.

Industrial action was approved by a large majority of the workforce on March 20, including a broad range of strike action, ranging from 1-to-24-hour stoppages, bans on overtime, and other bans that will cut across the company's operations and profits.

### **Aurizon refuses to pay unionised rail workers**

A long-running dispute between the Rail Train and Bus Union (RTBU) and Aurizon over a new enterprise agreement has escalated, with Aurizon refusing to pay workers imposing legally authorised work bans. Workers responded to the effective lockout with stop-work action on March 22–23.

In early March, workers voted nearly unanimously to proceed with industrial action including strike action and work bans to secure their demands.

The RTBU is seeking a 15 percent "wage repair" increase to combat the rising cost of living, noting that transport and food costs have significantly outpaced recent 10 percent pay rises.

Further industrial action is expected.

### **Queensland rail workers locked out**

On Wednesday, around 200 train controllers in Queensland, covered by the Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU), were set to hold limited work bans intended to impact only privately owned coal and freight trains. They are opposing a real wage cutting offer of just a 10.5 percent nominal increase over four years.

Queensland Rail (QR) and the Liberal-National Party government responded by shutting down 300 passenger services between Darra and Rosewood on the Ipswich line and Central and Cleveland and disrupting 20,000 commuters' travel plans.

The following day, 150 QR workers covered by the Electrical Trades Union also took protected industrial action, saying they would only come into work to repair faults on the network if there was a safety risk. Queensland Rail however told them they would not be paid unless they performed their full duties.



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