

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.

India: Haryana municipal sanitation workers continue statewide strike

More than 30,000 sanitation workers organised by the Municipal Workers Union across Haryana have been on strike since May 1 over several demands. Workers from several cities have had battles with police and scabs trying clean up the mounting piles of garbage in the streets. In Sonipat, striking workers lay down in front of bulldozers on Tuesday, forcing the city's municipal corporation to abort a police-backed attempt to clear rotting garbage.

Workers protested in front of their respective municipal corporation offices demanding the filling of vacant posts through permanent recruitment, abolishing the contract system, and implementing a monthly minimum wage of 30,000 rupees (\$US317). Workers said the strike would continue until their demands were met.

Jammu and Kashmir road construction workers protest for better wages and living conditions

On May 12, road tunnel construction workers at Ramban, in Jammu and Kashmir, stopped work to protest harassment by management, and to demand better wages. Workers chanted slogans like "We want justice," "Equal work for equal pay," and "Stop labour law violations." The workers are on contract, employed under the National Highway Authority of India project.

Punjab: Phagwara Municipal Corporation sanitation workers on strike

The strike by Phagwara Municipal Corporation sanitation workers entered its third day on Wednesday. Workers organised by the Joint Public Action Front Punjab and the Punjab and Nagar Palika Sanitation Employees Federation surrounded the office of the municipal commissioner in support of their demands like job security and democratic rights. Garbage collection, sewerage maintenance and other routine civic operations suffered major disruptions.

Himachal Pradesh Road Transport Corporation workers to strike

Himachal Pradesh Road Transport Corporation workers protested in Shimla on Wednesday over wage payment delays. Around 20,000 workers at 28 depots, pensioners and their families face hardship due to the delay. The transportation workers threatened to strike if their wages are not paid and other demands not met. They said that conductors, drivers and mechanics in remote areas were in distress because of the outstanding wages and that they will stop work after the 2nd of each month until they paid.

Bangladesh: Barishal University teachers protest for promotions

Teachers from the Barishal University continued their "complete shutdown" protest for the third consecutive day on Wednesday to demand the resignation of the vice-chancellor and promotions. All classes and examinations were suspended.

Teachers from different departments gathered at the university's Zero Point and staged a sit-down protest on Monday. Teachers alleged that recruitment and promotions at the university had remained stalled for a long time, disrupting academic activities. Other workers at the university expressed their solidarity with the teachers.

Teachers said a tripartite meeting involving teacher representatives, university authorities, and the Barishal divisional commissioner was held on April 30, where assurances were given regarding resolving promotion-related complications.

On April 21, the teachers had held a work abstention campaign over the same demands. Their protest escalated into shutdowns and a full non-cooperation movement announced on April 28. The protesting teachers warned that the shutdown would resume after the Eid holidays if their demands were not met. Teachers reported that no effective decision emerged from a university administration's meeting on May 9.

Wambo coal mine workers in New South Wales hold another 3-day strike

On May 8, Mining and Energy Union (MEU) members from the Peabody Energy-managed Wambo coal mine in the Hunter Region, north of Sydney, stopped work for three days to protest the company's proposed enterprise agreement. The 19 workers are employed at the washery within Glencore's United Wambo Joint Venture. They stopped work for three days on May 1 in opposition to Peabody's pay rise offer of

only 2.5 percent per year and its proposed changes to bonus arrangements that would leave them worse off.

Other issues are that Peabody is refusing to backdate any wage increase and continues to insist that workers go another full year before seeing further increases. It also wants to move to fortnightly pay and reduce crib breaks.

In a separate dispute, MEU members at Glencore mines in the Hunter region are currently fighting the company's plan to introduce three tiers in new agreements. The lowest tier has no bonus, with progression controlled by management rather than based on time or experience. The MEU claimed the new lower tiers would lock in cheaper labour-hire rates that could reduce current annual wages by 24 percent, or around \$38,000 per year.

ACT public servants strike for better pay offer and conditions

Some 95 percent of ACT (Australian Capital Territory) public servants from health and administration voted on May 7 to approve future industrial action over their enterprise agreement dispute with the ACT government. The agreement covers over 1,600 Community and Public Service Union (CPSU) members, including health professionals and administration workers.

As part of the action, CPSU members from Housing ACT walked off the job for an hour on Thursday to demand the ACT's Labor government improve its current pay offer of 3 percent annual increases in a three-year agreement. One worker commented that rising car parking fees outstrip the sub-inflation offer. The current consumer prices index (CPI) rate for Canberra, the ACT capital, is 4.2 percent and predicted to rise further.

The CPSU said that if the offer was accepted, the workforce's superannuation increase of 0.5 percent, taking employer contributions to 13 percent, would have been pushed back six months to July 1, 2028. The union said previously offered entitlements, including more than 12 weeks extra leave for non-birthing parents, remained the same. Workers want a pay increase that keeps up with the rapidly rising cost of living and no loss of existing conditions.

ACT teachers begin industrial action

About 3,800 public school teachers, along with school psychologists and school assistants, began industrial action on Thursday to oppose the ACT government's enterprise agreement offer. Action by members of the Australian Education Union (AEU) began with a series of bans which will continue until the end of term 2. On Friday they wore red or AEU merchandise, to be followed again on May 22, and held a two-hour strike, starting at 8.30 a.m. Members will hold work stoppages during school visits by ACT Labor members of parliament.

The union presented its log of claims to the government in July 2025. As well as a pay increase, the union wants adequate staffing, proper training, support for inclusive training and planning for a sustainable workforce. It has threatened to escalate industrial action if there is no progress in negotiations by May 25.

DXC Technology workers strike again over low pay and wage theft

Over 200 members of Professionals Australia (PA) and the Australia Services Union (ASU) at DXC Technology stopped work for five days on May 8 to protest low pay and wage theft. DXC's software developers, infrastructure specialists and security analysts provide software design and support for the Commonwealth Bank, Westpac, ANZ and major government agencies. The unions alleged that DXC used scab labour when the IT workers also struck for 24 hours on April 2.

The workers, who have not had a pay increase for five years, rejected DXC's enterprise agreement offer which included a below inflation pay rise of 2.5 percent in the first year (with no back pay), followed by 3 percent increases in the second and third years. DXC has been underpaying workers since 2017.

Last year, the US-based company whose 5,000 Australian employees generated revenues of \$2.35 billion during 2023–24, closed its Hobart delivery centre, moving its team to offices South Australia and the Philippines in a move that affected 77 jobs and left at least 15 unemployed.

Campbell's Soup factory workers in Victoria strike for pay and job security

About 100 Australian Manufacturing Workers Union members from Campbell's Soup in Shepparton, Victoria walked off the job for 24 hours on May 7 to protest Arnott's Group's sub-inflation pay offer and plans to slash jobs. Arnott's Group, which owns Campbell's Soup, offered a 7.7 percent pay rise over three years on condition that workers agree to lift the current 15 percent cap on employing casual labour.

The current average consumer prices index rate for Australia is 4.6 percent meaning workers would need a 13.8 percent pay increase over three years just to keep pace with inflation. Workers said they are not just fighting for a decent pay rise but for rights and job security. Arnott's Group reported over \$1.6 billion in revenue last year.

Goldwind wind farm construction workers strike for new enterprise agreement

About 60 members of the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) from the wind farm construction company Goldwind have begun rolling work stoppages at five sites in New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania. The union said that Goldwind management have refused to meet with ETU delegates who have accused management of trying to force workers into longer rosters and take control of discretionary rostered days off. The ETU has yet to publicly reveal what its wage demand is, saying its members just want a fair deal and for Goldwind to negotiate.

Tasmania: Dental health clinic workers walk out again

Tasmanian government oral health workers and members of the Health and Community Services Union at Sorell, George Town and Kingston dental clinics walked out for two hours on Monday. The next day Northern Dental Centre workers struck in solidarity with dental assistants and sterilising technicians across the state seeking back pay and higher classifications. Clarence Dental Centre and New Norfolk Dental Clinic

workers struck for two hours on May 1, followed by Sorell Dental Clinic workers on May 4. The walkouts are part of ongoing state-wide strike action by HACSU members. The unions says 18 months of promises from the state government regarding backpay and higher classifications have come to nothing.

Public school nurses in Victoria maintain industrial action for pay parity

Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation members at public schools across Victoria are maintaining low-level industrial action begun on April 31 to win higher wages and conditions in a new enterprise agreement. The ANMF has been negotiating with the state Labor government on behalf of its 339 state school members since last June. The union says its members are currently paid up to 20 percent less than equivalent public sector nurses working in hospitals, a difference that will increase to 30 percent under the government's wages policy by the end of 2027.

The ANMF is demanding wage parity with nurses employed under the Victorian Public Sector Nurses and Midwives Agreement 2024–28. The union also wants a commitment from the Victorian government that school nurse workloads are safe and that the primary school nursing program is available to all families with children in their first year of school. The nurses provide crucial support to students from prep to year 12 in Victoria's state schools, promoting health, planning wellbeing and development aid.

The nurses voted in April for future strike action, including up to 24 hours, and a wide range of partial work bans. Despite strong support for a strike, the union has restricted its members to wearing union badges at work, placing union material on notice boards, stopping work for ten minutes to explain their dispute to parents and other minor protests.



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