



**THE FACTS ON WAGE
DISCRIMINATION
AGAINST ABORIGINES**

"There must be an end to wage discrimination"

This resolution on Aborigines was adopted by the 1963 Congress of the A.C.T.U.

Recent legislation has improved the legal status of Aborigines but their wages are still appallingly low. Most Aborigines live in Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia where they provide a source of cheap labor for the pastoral industry.

EXCLUDED FROM AWARDS

Aborigines are specifically excluded from most pastoral Awards.

These are the Federal Awards, viz., the Pastoral Industry Award 1956, the Queensland Station Hands Award (80) 1961 and the Cattle Station Industry (N.T.) Award 1951.

NORTHERN TERRITORY: HOW EQUAL IS AN ABORIGINE ON £2/8/3 A WEEK?

This is the wage (plus keep for a wife and one child) specified for Aboriginal agricultural, domestic, pastoral, timber and transport workers in the Northern Territory. Adult females get £1/5/3 per week whatever their jobs. Where keep is not provided, an extra £2/13/- is paid to men, and 16/6 weekly for women.

QUEENSLAND: THE "ACTIVE" AND THE "NOT ACTIVE".

Head drovers, head stockmen and stockmen in charge of out stations are the only ones entitled to full award rates.

Drovers aged from 21 to 45 and if over 45 and "active" get £10/12/- (the Award for non Aborigines is £17/9/4); but if judged "not active" by the employer the pay rate falls to £5/12/6. Cooks preparing food for Europeans are paid £9 but cooks for Aborigines £6/12/6.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA: WAGES AS LOW AS £1 A WEEK

In this State no rates are fixed for Aborigines in the pastoral industry. They work for their keep and as little as £1 cash wages, up to the basic wage for a minority of station hands.

OTHER STATES:

Wages in other States depend largely on location. Aborigines working in outback areas are likely to get rates similar to those in bordering States; in the more settled areas they generally get award rates.

GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENTS AND CHURCH MISSIONS:

Rates paid on Settlements and Missions in Queensland and the Northern Territory tend to be even lower than those quoted above.

On the Lake Tyers Reserve in Victoria able bodied residents are required to do 32 hours of work weekly for cash wages of 15/- to £2.

OTHER ECONOMIC DISABILITIES:

On the basis of this fundamental discrimination regarding wages a host of other economic disabilities thrive to dog the lives of Aboriginal working people.

For example: money earned by Queensland Aborigines and Torres Islanders is paid into trust accounts and can be drawn only with the permission of officials of the Native Affairs Department: standards for holiday and leave provisions, food and accommodation are inferior to those provided in pastoral Awards.

In social services, there is discrimination in various forms in everything from unemployment benefits and child endowment to the special allowance paid to the tuberculosis sufferers.

PROPOSED REFORMS NEED REFORMING:

A report of a Special Committee on Aborigines recently recommended to the Queensland Parliament that the clause excluding Aborigines from the benefits of the Station Hands Award be abolished and a "slow worker" clause be inserted. The Award however already has such a clause, and any amendment mentioning Aborigines specifically must be opposed strenuously.

The Northern Territory Legislative Council is considering proposals that there be two or three grades between the present minimum (£2/8/3 plus keep) and the Award rate. The North Australian Workers' Union maintains that the BASIC WAGE must be the minimum rate for Aborigines, and that additions to this must be made for skill and experience.

UNIONS MOVE FOR JUSTICE:

Most work done by Aborigines is covered by the Australian Workers' Union and the North Australian Workers' Union, which are both trying to have the discriminatory clauses removed from their Awards.

UNION SUPPORT IS NEEDED:

Aborigines and Torres Islanders need the assistance of all Australians, particularly trade unionists.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Raise the matter of wage discrimination against Aborigines at the meeting of your own union or organization, and see that your union or organization is represented on the committee whose name and address appears below:

Protest to State and Federal Country Party Parliamentarians, and the various Graziers Associations.

Support the efforts of the A.W.U., N.A.W.U. and A.C.T.U. in their fight against discrimination in Awards.

Report wage and social service discriminations to us.

Assist our Committee with urgently needed finance.

Article 23.—Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"Section 2.—Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work."

Authorised by the Equal Wages for Aborigines Committee, a sub committee of the Federal Council for Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

Hon. Secretary, Dr. B. Christophers, 336 Church Street, Richmond, Victoria.

Please find enclosed the sum of.....

.....being a contribution towards the activities of the Equal Wages for Aborigines Committee.

Name.....

Address.....