

School Cleaning State Conference Motion

Motion

- This state conference calls on the state Government to act urgently to restore the hours of school cleaners that were cut resulting from the recent contract change.
- This state conference calls on the state Government to immediately cease the tender process for school cleaning contracts 2025-27 and move to directly employ school cleaners starting term 1 2025.
- This state conference condemns the cuts to wages and conditions faced by school cleaners under the watch of the state government.
- This state conference condemns the recent decision to continue the harmful contractor model of school cleaning that hurts, cleaners, schools, and the broader community.
- This state conference reaffirms that good union jobs are core Labor values.
- This state conference reaffirms that outsourcing and privatisation goes against Labor values.

Background

For many years, school cleaners in Victoria, through their union, the United Workers Union, have been campaigning for the Victorian State Labor Government to reverse Jeff Kennett's privatisation of school cleaners.

This Victorian Labor Government has decided to maintain Kennett's privatisation of school cleaners.

The 2023 Victorian ALP State Conference unanimously passed a motion to end the outsourcing of school cleaning calling on the Victorian State Government to urgently

meet with school cleaners and their union, to discuss the transition to direct employment by the Government.

This Victorian Labor Government decided to disregard this 2023 Labor State Conference outcome.

School Cleaners had met in good faith with many Labor Members of Parliament including former Education Minister Natalie. Many school cleaners then campaigned for the Labor Party believing they were the party of government who were genuinely committed to delivering secure jobs for Victorians.

Deputy Premier and Education Minister Ben Carroll decided with no direct engagement with school cleaners that the government will continue to outsource the cleaning of public schools.

This decision to keep school cleaners in insecure contract work was made on the backdrop of 700 cleaners going through a contract transition for 2024, with companies Serco and Tradeflex taking over the cleaning of schools for this year by slashing hours and cutting pay for cleaners.

Under Minister Carroll, hundreds of school cleaners, some of Victoria's lowest paid and most vulnerable workers went into Christmas 2023, with no public holiday pay, having their hours cut, pay slashed and conditions lost for 2024, with some workers losing up to 60% of their income. One example is a Union Member having their wage cut from \$49,000 in 2023 to \$19,000 for this year. With this context, Mr Carroll's announcement to improve wages 5% above the award for school cleaners is insulting and inadequate.

It is reprehensible that this Victorian Labor Government has stood by and allowed the companies that they pay to clean our schools, cut the hours, and pay of workers, reducing the quality of cleaning and despite this, tell these cleaners and school communities that the privatisation of school cleaning is what this Labor Government believes in.

Moved: Julie Hooper

Seconded: Sofia Floros