

ACTU SURVEY: OUR LIVING STANDARDS, OUR VOICE

Final Results

Total survey participants = 43,188 (15 January, 2015) – drawn from all states and territories

Fieldwork time: November 2014-January 2015

Fieldwork and datafile management was conducted by Your Source in Melbourne <http://www.yrsource.com/>

An online survey mode was adopted and the survey questionnaire was sent to union members across the country. The survey was also distributed on social media.

These results follow a “big data” data approach and are not derived from randomised sampling techniques.

Basic demographics:

Union/former members	93.0%
Non-members	7.0%
Female	52.7%
Male	46.9%
Other	0.4%
Under 44 years	26.9%
45-64 years	63.5%
65 and over	9.6%

Highlights from the survey results:

Question 1:

Would you say that Australia is heading in the right direction or the wrong direction?

Respondents: 43,188

Response	%
Strongly wrong direction	34
Mainly wrong direction	40
Mainly right direction	24
Strongly right direction	2

Question 2:

Please say how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Respondents: 39,856

Statement	Strongly agree/agree (%)	Strongly disagree/disagree (%)
Right now it's hard to get a decent pay rise in my workplace	70	30
Senior management at my work has more and more power over working conditions	68	32
Each year I feel like I work harder for less and less in return	68	32
Stress at work causes my health to suffer	65	35
Senior management takes occupational health and safety seriously	57	43
I worry about losing my job in the next few years	55	45
It's easy to get enough hours (or shifts) to cover my living costs	45	55
I feel comfortable speaking up about my rights at work	42	58
I find it easy to balance my work and family commitments	37	63
If I lost my job now, it would be easy to find a job as good as the one I have now	10	90

Question 3:

Thinking of the last year or so, please say which of the following items have become less affordable to manage on your personal or family budget.

Respondents: 36,435

Item	%
Electricity, gas, water	85
Childcare	82
School and education	81
Food	74
Dental and medical	73
Transport	70
Personal loans/credit card	48
Mortgage/rent	46

Question 4:

How are you managing on your current household income?

Respondents: 36,024

Response	%
Doing really well	2
Living comfortably	23
Coping	48
Difficult to get by	19
Very difficult to get by	9

Question 5:

A number of decisions or proposals by the Abbott Government may have an impact on job security and rights at work over the next few years. How worried are you about the following changes or proposals?

	Very worried (%)	Worried (%)	Not worried (%)	Not worried at all (%)	Number of respondents
Any proposal to cut penalty rates	51	35	12	3	34,780
Commission of Audit proposal to reduce minimum wage over 10 years	61	31	6	1	34,803
Any new laws or proposals from government inquiries to reduce rights at work	64	30	5	1	34,793
The loss of Australia's manufacturing industry	59	33	7	1	34,797
Rising unemployment especially among young people	62	33	4	1	34,792
Allowing work visas (like 457s) to drive down Australian wages and conditions to avoid training locals	54	31	12	3	34,789

Question 6:

A number of decisions or proposals by the Abbott Government may have an impact on your cost of living over the next few years. How worried are you about the following changes or proposals?

Response	Co-payments on GP visits and higher charges on medical services available under Medicare (%)	Large increases in fees for university and TAFE putting education out of reach (%)	Any proposal to increase the rate of the GST or to expand what the GST covers (%)	More privatisation and outsourcing at a state and federal level (%)
Very worried	59	68	51	69
Worried	28	23	32	25
Not worried	10	5	14	5
Not worried at all	3	4	3	1
Number of respondents	35,690	35,696	35,696	35,693

Question 7:

A number of decisions and possible proposals by the Abbott Government may have an impact on support and services available from governments over the next few years. How worried are you about the following changes or possible proposals?

a) Any proposal that means the age pension no longer keeps pace with increases in wages

Response	%
Very worried	72
Worried	24
Not worried	4
Not worried at all	1
Number of respondents	34,661

b) The decision to raise the pension age to 70 years

Response	%
Strongly agree	63
Agree	26
Disagree	10
Strongly disagree	2
Number of respondents	34,657

Question 8:

Thinking to the future, what sort of changes would you like to see happen to improve the social safety net in Australia?

Increases in superannuation contributions to 12% as soon as possible

Response	%
Strongly agree	61
Agree	32
Disagree	6
Strongly disagree	1
Number of respondents	34,661

Question 9:

Here are the list of statements that try and capture how you think Australian society and politics is changing. Please say how much you agree or disagree with these statements.

Respondents: 33,234

Statement	Strongly agree/agree (%)	Strongly disagree/disagree (%)
Big corporations have too much influence over politics	96	4
I worry about a growing number of 'working poor' like there is in America	92	8
I worry that, in the future, ordinary people won't be able to send their kids to university	92	8
I worry kids today won't have access to good jobs when they grow up	88	12
Australia is still the land of the fair go	32	68
We should balance the budget and keep debt low – even if it means growth, jobs and services are affected	24	76
Lower living standards are something that Australians just need to accept	13	87