

RESOLUTION 1: Fair Standards for Online Workers

This UNI APRO Commerce Conference calls on all employers to provide safe and secure employment for workers in the online commerce (retail) and delivery industries.

Around the world, conglomerates like Amazon put in place barriers for unions and workers to discuss workplace issues. In 2018, the TWU and SDA in Australia joined forces as the “Online Retail and Delivery Workers Alliance” to organise Amazon workers to get safer workplaces and better conditions. The SDA and TWU’s work during 2020 saw Australian Amazon warehouses recognised as the safest in the world.

Online Commerce giant Amazon has grown exponentially since the onset of the COVID19 pandemic. Amazon has more than 1.3 million direct employees across the globe, however, it fails to account for the hundreds of thousands of subcontracted logistics workers that are in precarious and insecure work.

This Alliance between the SDA and TWU is part of the global union movement’s work to provide security for workers in the online industry, maximizing the capacity to protect workers through coordinated organising activities. The objective is to unionise Amazon workers and improve wages and conditions.

Amazon is well known around the world for its poor working conditions and its anti-union tactics which have been evidenced most recently in Bessemer, Alabama USA.

Such dreadful conditions have resulted in workers and their families being driven to the brink, forcing them to seek government assistance to make ends meet.

Already Amazon is undermining the hard-fought pay and conditions that transport workers in Australia have achieved over the last 100 years with the introduction of Amazon Flex, a gig-style delivery service. There is currently zero regulation on the rates that individual contractor owner/drivers are paid, and Amazon is looking to take full advantage of this by undercutting companies who pay the legal minimum rates of pay.

We must not let their atrocious record on working conditions around the world continue. The SDA and TWU will ensure Amazon workers in Australia are highly organized and acutely aware of their own rights and the company’s legal and moral responsibilities.

This UNI APRO Commerce Conference calls on governments to require all businesses operating in online commerce and delivery to comply with their industrial and legal obligations to employees and to advocate for secure and direct employment of workers.