

For immediate release

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Keeping ASB staff in work -GOOD Freeze their wages - BAD

The bank workers union Finsec says the ASB bank's goal to avoid job cuts is a positive step in the right direction, but says wage freezes for middle income earners don't have to be part of the package given how profitable the bank is.

ASB announced a suite of actions today aimed at keeping staff in work, including a wage freeze for all of those on \$50,000 or more.

"ASB announced an after tax profit of \$238 million for the first six months of their financial year. We think they have enough wriggle room to provide low and middle income earners with a fair wage increase this year," said Finsec Campaigns Director Andrew Campbell.

Campbell said the financial crisis should not be used as justification to cut or freeze pay when banks continue to make large profits despite the current conditions.

"Some of the big banks are actually growing their profits in the midst of this recession. Before wages are frozen we think ASB needs to open their books and explain why such a move is necessary and how it is not simply using the current crisis to cut costs and increase profit," said Campbell.

"ASB's goal to keep staff in work is positive, as is their commitment to not offshore work. This shows a social responsibility bereft in the other Australian owned banks who are currently shedding staff," said Campbell.

"We congratulate ASB on demonstrating a social conscious in relation to keeping their staff in work and call on other banks to do the same. However we do not believe that a wage freeze should be the price to pay to keep a job when the bank is so profitable," said Campbell.

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