

Monday 12 November, 2018

## **ACTU supports changes to toughen Modern Slavery Bill**

It is disgusting that slavery exists widely in the supply chains of companies doing business in Australia.

The peak body for working people calls on all senators to support amendments that will make the Modern Slavery Bill an effective weapon in the fight to eradicate slavery – forced labour, child labour, and debt bondage - in the supply chains of companies doing business in Australia.

Key measures include penalties for companies that refuse to take part in the reporting and compliance regime. If introduced, companies would be held accountable when they do not report on the presence of slavery in their supply chains.

The peak body also called an independent anti-slavery commissioner to oversee the scheme. Such an office has proven crucial to ensuring proper monitoring and enforcement takes place in similar schemes overseas.

The ACTU renewed its calls for the Federal Government to use its buying power to exclude non-compliant companies from tendering for publicly-funded contracts, and has called for a public list of the companies that must report, with disclosure of the reporting status of each company.

### **Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O’Neil**

“In 2018, no company should tolerate the presence of slavery - forced labour, debt bondage, and child labour - in their supply chains. And to refuse to investigate its presence is tantamount to profiteering from slavery.

“We call for changes to this Bill that hold companies accountable for the presence of slavery in their supply chain, and provide penalties for those companies that choose not to investigate and report.

“If these changes come into place, companies will need to report what they have done to deal with slavery in their supply chains and they will face penalties if they do not. This sends a strong message that they cannot get away with tolerating the presence of slavery as “business as usual.

“The Government must also lead by example and ensure that its own procurement policy excludes non compliant companies.

“The appointment of an independent anti-slavery commissioner will ensure proper monitoring takes place, rather than having oversight of the scheme buried within Peter Dutton’s department.”

**ENDS**

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