

Monday, 21 October 2019

Report shows ABC wage theft from casuals of \$22.9 million

A report published today by the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) shows that the ABC was aware that casual staff were being underpaid, but ignored formal complaints from staff and their unions as well as ignoring opportunities to proactively fix the situation.

It is now ten months since a CPSU member formally disputed their pay and raised issues with the payment of casual staff at the ABC, but there has been no action from the national broadcaster.

None of the 2,500 staff affected have been paid back, with the last communication from management to casual staff informing them that repayment of wages had been delayed indefinitely.

The CPSU report identifies a catalogue of opportunities to address the issue going back years which were ignored by ABC management.

These include when new ABC Enterprise Agreements came into effect, when ABC casual loadings were increased from 20 to 25%, and most significantly in April 2016 when the CPSU and MEAA formally raised concerns about casual underpayment in ABC enterprise bargaining.

Despite management insisting that change has occurred, ABC unions report that no changes have been made.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“There is no good excuse for not returning money owed to the people who work for you.

“When a good employer identifies an underpayment or their staff brings it to their attention, their first concern is to return the money. Good employers work with unions every day to fix such problems.

“ABC management have overseen wage theft and sat on money that is not theirs for far too long. This is money that casual staff need to pay their bills.

“The Morrison Government has allowed wage theft to become a business model where a slow and expensive legal system allows employers to delay and frustrate working people’s access to justice.

“The Morrison Government wants to make it even harder for unions to stand up for the rights of their workers by pushing through its union-busting Ensuring Integrity bill.

“ABC must take immediate action to address their wrongdoing and make changes to ensure that it never happens again.”

Media contact: Peter Green 0400 764 200; ACTU Media: 03 9664 7337