

Tuesday, 29 October 2019

## Business proposed bargaining changes would cost workers billions

A new report from the Australia Institute's Centre for Future Work includes modelling which shows that the changes to bargaining rules proposed by business groups would cost workers currently on private sector EBAs \$2000 over the first three years and rip billions in wages from the workforce as a whole.

At a time when Australia is in a wages crisis and enterprise bargaining in the private sector is down to just 11 per cent coverage, weakening the rights and protections of working people will make things even worse.

The report highlights that the proposed changes - weakening or removing the Better Off Overall Test, reducing scrutiny of non-union EBAs, narrowing the scope of what can be covered by an agreement, and blocking bargaining on certain projects all together through 'whole of life' Greenfields agreements - will mirror the effect of WorkChoices.

The Morrison Government has made it clear that it has a radical agenda to change workplace laws to further entrench the power of corporations over working people. Unlike John Howard's hated WorkChoices, this time the Morrison Government is drip feeding its plans in an attempt to disguise the extent and impact of the changes.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

"Australian workers haven't had a pay rise in almost seven years. We have a wages crisis and this report shows that the Morrison Government is getting ready to rip billions out of working people's pockets.

"Slow wage growth has stalled the entire economy. This Government is fixated on trickle-down economics, but that experiment has failed.

"Australians literally can't afford much more of this Government. By reducing the power of working people and unions and caving to business on changes to the law, the Morrison Government is crushing wage growth.

"The Morrison Government could take a step towards positive wage growth tomorrow by withdrawing its union-bashing bills and supporting union efforts to increase wages across the country."

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