

Tuesday, 26 November 2019

## Union regulators conducted unlawful raids

In a blow to the Morrison Government's arguments for the Ensuring Integrity Bill currently before the senate the Federal Court has ruled the union regulator, the Register Organisations Commission (ROC) investigation into the AWU was invalid.

Justice Bromberg has ruled that the ROC did not have grounds to order an AFP raid on the offices of the AWU and has ordered the return of the documents that were seized on behalf of the regulator in their first act after being established by the Liberal Government in 2017.

The decision comes as the Morrison Government attempts to pass the Ensuring Integrity Bill in the Senate which would give the ROC the extreme power to determine which unions are deregistered and which officials are disqualified under the dangerous and hypocritical new union-busting law.

Under the EI Bill the ROC would have the power to begin deregistration proceedings against a union which had made a handful of paperwork mistakes over a period of 10 years.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"The Morrison government has been telling Senators that the ROC is an impartial body which can administer the extraordinary powers granted under EI. The Federal Court has just found it conducted an illegal raid on a union office.

"Giving union busters more power to drag unions into courts over minor paperwork breaches, some that would only cost a company an \$80 fine, Will cost members and the taxpayer millions in legal fees. This is before accounting for the cost of not being able to campaign for higher wages, better working conditions and safer workplaces.

"To defend themselves from the ROC's harrassment the AWU was forced to expending significant resources over two years to get justice. If the Ensuring Integrity Bill passes, all unions could face this harrassment over paperwork breaches.

"Questions also need to be asked of the ROC who is continuing to waste tax payer's money to challenge this finding.

"This ruling gives the crossbench senators a stark example of how the Morrison government targets unions and will stop at nothing to try and bust unions. Ensuring Integrity will become another tool for union busters and should be rejected.

"The Federal Court decision is a vindication for the AWU but also a warning for the Senate crossbench who weighing amendments which would give this discredited body even more power."

**ENDS**

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