

Saturday 6 February 2020

Australian workers will be worse off under IR Omnibus Bill

Australian workers who have sacrificed so much during the pandemic are going to be deeply affected by the Morrison Government's proposed changes to industrial relations legislation, a senate inquiry into the IR Omnibus Bill will hear next week.

The ACTU's submission to the senate inquiry states that the changes will not only harm workers, but will hurt Australia's post-pandemic economic recovery.

Across three hearings in Townsville, Adelaide and Canberra, union members will provide their lived experience as evidence of the harmful impacts this bill will have on their lives.

The ACTU's main concerns with the IR Omnibus Bill include but are not limited to: making it easier for employers to casualise jobs that would have otherwise been permanent, making bargaining for better pay and conditions more difficult than it already is, allowing wage cuts, taking rights off blue collar workers on big projects, and weakening wage theft punishments in jurisdictions where it was already deemed a criminal act.

The bill will also allow the Fair Work Commission to approve agreements that do not pass the Better Off Overall Test (BOOT) meaning workers could be significantly worse off, even though exemptions for exceptional circumstances already exist for businesses that are struggling to recover from the pandemic-related recession.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus,

"As we have consistently said, we will not support a bill that leaves workers worse off.

"The workers that will be most hurt by this bill are the ones that helped get this country through a once-in-a-century crisis: cleaners, delivery drivers, supermarket workers. They deserve job security and respect.

"These laws will harm our economic recovery, they are a recipe for keeping wages low and jobs insecure.

"As all working people know; bargaining with employers for better pay and conditions is already difficult enough. Australian workers are suffering from years of wage stagnation, and that is not the way to lead this country to economic recovery.

"The rate of casualisation of our workforce desperately needs to be addressed. This bill will make the problem worse.

"If this bill cannot be fixed, it needs to be dumped."

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