

Tuesday 23 February 2020

## Pay cuts inch closer as IR Omnibus Bill passes lower house

The proposed IR Omnibus Bill has passed through the lower house, bringing closer measures that will make jobs more insecure at a time when working Australians need and deserve certainty.

The ALP, the Greens, Dr Helen Haines, Bob Katter, Rebekha Sharkie and Andrew Wilkie chose to defend the rights of working people and voted against the Bill.

The Bill will leave working people worse off with cuts to take home pay and conditions, fewer rights and less job security.

It will shift power in bargaining to big business, removing protections which ensure workers understand what they are voting on and that they will be better off. It will be harder for workers to bargain for better conditions and more pay – a process that is already extremely difficult.

Under the Bill the rights of casual workers will be reduced with a casual definition that will increase job insecurity and retrospectively take away the rights of misclassified workers to recover their entitlements.

The Bill will extend JobKeeper provisions without the payment of JobKeeper, giving employers the ability to direct workers to perform different duties and work at different locations, and removing current rights to have disputes resolved by the Fair Work Commission.

The Bill must be opposed in its current form. Workers are now reliant on the senate crossbench to prevent this damaging attack on their rights from becoming law.

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

“The Bill fails to address the systemic issue of insecure work in Australia. In fact, the Bill will make it easier for employers to casualise permanent jobs. It makes permanent changes to bargaining, making it harder for workers to win pay rises.

“We welcome the ALP, the Greens, Dr Helen Haines, Bob Katter, Rebekha Sharkie and Andrew Wilkie standing up for Australian workers and voting against this Bill.

“The Bill will also strip overtime and certainty from part-time workers the majority of whom are women, enabling employers to flex hours of work up or down with no penalties – effectively creating another class of casual workers.

“Insecure work is going to hold the economy back in its recovery and this Bill will make it worse. We should be rebuilding the economy with stronger rights for working people – not hard wiring insecurity and uncertainty into our workplace laws.

“This Bill would also expand the scope of Greenfields agreements – potentially leaving isolated construction workers on major projects unable to address workplace issues for up to eight years.

“At the very time our country needs certainty and confidence, when small businesses are needing people to spend, this Bill will enshrine insecurity and suppress wages for years to come.

“It shifts power towards big business and leaves working people worse off.

“It is now down to the senate crossbench to decide whether they’ll defend working people against pay cuts and greater job insecurity.”

**Media contact:** Kleo Cruse 0433 021 999