

Thursday 15 July 2021

## **FWC calls unions, employers, NSW and Federal Governments to conference to discuss safeguards for workers in lockdown**

FWC President Iain Ross has called Australian Business Industrial, the ACTU, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Australian Industry Group, the Australian Retailers Association, the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia, Master Builders Australia, the Master Grocers Association, the National Farmers' Federation, the National Retail Association, the Newsagents Association of NSW and ACT and representatives from the Australian Government, and NSW Treasury together to discuss necessary safeguards for workers who are receiving recently announced lockdown support payments.

The ACTU is calling for all Modern Awards to be varied to provide that businesses and organisations receiving the new payments to be required to:

- Advise each employee that they are in receipt of a government payment and that whilst they continue to receive that payment they are not permitted to terminate the employment of staff, or reduce the number of staff employed or reduce the hours of part time or casual employees,
- Provide employees with information about any additional supports which are available to them through State or Federal Governments.

In addition, the ACTU believe the FWC should be available to resolve any disputes between employers and working people that arise from the implementation of these new arrangements, measures that were extremely effective in keeping employers honest under JobKeeper.

The ACTU looks forward to discussing these arrangements at the conference to be held next Tuesday.

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

“The measures announced by the Morrison Government this week leave workers exposed to exploitation and unscrupulous bosses seeking to rot the system.

“By abandoning JobKeeper – a tested system which workers and employers understood – the Morrison Government has created uncertainty and confusion for workers and businesses.

“The ACTU welcomes an opportunity to discuss with business and governments how we can ensure that workers keep their jobs while their employers are receiving support, and are made aware of the rights they have during lockdown, as well as what supports are available to them.

“When unions, employers and governments have worked together during this pandemic we have been able to achieve incredible things. Protecting working people living through lockdowns is a critical task which requires cooperation. We look forward to meeting next week.”

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Please see attached briefing document for more information about the FWC conference process.