



Australian Council of Trade Unions

MEDIA RELEASE

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Pay, job security and workplace safety at risk for Australia Post workers, says ACTU

Employers should not be able to stand in the way of workers taking industrial action over job security, workplace safety and take home pay, the ACTU said today.

The ACTU will seek to intervene in an important full bench hearing of Fair Work Australia into a move by Australia Post to prevent employees voting for protected industrial action.

This will be third attempt by Australia Post to stymie its workers' from having their say on whether or not to take industrial action in pursuit of a new enterprise agreement which would boost job security, safety at work and take-home pay.

ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence said the peak body had decided to intervene in support of the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union because an important matter of democratic principle was at stake.

"Three times now, the CEPU has applied for a secret ballot and each time Australia Post has sought to prevent its employers from voting on whether they want to take protected action," Mr Lawrence said.

"Regardless of the issues at stake in these negotiations, it is a fundamental democratic principle that workers should be able to exercise their voting rights without interference from their employer.

"Secret ballots are designed to ensure workers have a say over whether to take industrial action, and Fair Work Australia's role should be simply to ensure ballot will be fair.

"Instead employers are using technical legal arguments to prevent unions holding a vote of their members.

"The sole purpose in this case is to frustrate and delay industrial action to meet Australia Post's commercial interests.

"This type of interference in internal decision-making would not be countenanced in any other membership organisation."

The full bench appeal will be held in Fair Work Australia in Melbourne today (Friday, 20 November 2009) at 10am.

Media contact: Mark Phillips ph: (03) 8676 7266 or 0422 009 011; email: mphillips@actu.asn.au

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