

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **ABBOTT GOVERNMENT ATTACKING WORKERS' ENTITLEMENTS.**

[Tuesday 28 October 2014.](#)

Unions have condemned the Coalition Government for attempting to dismantle the Fair Entitlements Guarantee (FEG).

FEG is a vital safety net for workers when their employers become insolvent – leaving no money for unpaid wages or owed entitlements.

Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) and the Textile Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia (TCFUA) members are in Canberra today speaking to cross bench Senators, urging them to vote against the Government's legislation.

Labor and the Greens have committed to voting against the changes.

The Coalition promised not to water down workers' entitlements if elected but is now attempting to slash redundancy payments under FEG to a maximum 16 weeks.

"This will hit the most vulnerable workers, who are suddenly out of work for no fault of their own," AMWU Victorian secretary Steve Dargavel said.

"In this situation, workers are often left with thousands of dollars of owed wages and entitlements, stretching back months.

"A fair redundancy payment gives workers the chance of retraining and reskilling to increase their chance of getting another job."

Under FEG, the Federal Government provides employees with money for unpaid wages, (up to 13 weeks) annual leave and leave loading, long-service leave, superannuation, and redundancy payments based on their years of service.

The Fair Entitlements Guarantee has assisted thousands of workers and their families to put food on the table and pay their bills while looking for new jobs.

"This is an underhand and vicious attack on vulnerable workers," TCFUA national secretary Michele O'Neil said.

"It takes money off workers and their families just at the moment they need it most,

# Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union Textile Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia



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when they lose their jobs and all their entitlements," she said.

The ACTU is today launching a campaign, including an online video, to make sure entitlements are not watered down. ACTU President Ged Kearney said the Abbott Government has a clear agenda to strip away workplace rights, wages and conditions from everyday Australians.

"The Abbott Government reneged on their promise to secure workers' entitlement, they're attacking rights at work via the Fair Work Amendment Bill and they'll soon launch a Productivity Commission review of Workplace laws with terms of reference that may as well have been written by big business. Australian Unions won't stand by while Mr Abbott attacks their wages and conditions. We'll fight so working people get a fair go.

Unions are also calling on the Government to leave FEG in place, instead take action against unscrupulous business operators who engage in "phoenixing," using corporations law to avoid debts (including employee entitlements) by closing down one company, then opening under another company name and operating the same business usually at the same premises.

The ACTU's FEG video can be accessed at <http://youtu.be/OmDWknFguCo>

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