

MEDIA RELEASE

SENATORS PLEDGE TO REJECT GOVT'S REDUNDANCY CUTS

Thursday 30 October 2014

Australian Unions have enthusiastically welcomed today's commitment by the cross bench Senators to vote against the Abbott Government's unfair changes to the Fair Entitlements Guarantee.

A delegation of workers who have recently been made redundant, accompanied by officials from the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) and the Textile Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia (TCFUA) met with crossbench Senators in Canberra on Tuesday.

The workers told Senators about the importance of FEG in helping them survive being out of work. Some workers said they would have lost their homes without support from the FEG scheme.

"The Coalition broke an explicit election promise when they tried to reduce protections for workers who entitlements are threatened by company insolvency. Workers are reassured that Senators from Labor, the Greens, Independents and Palmer United Party have all promised to bury and cremate the governments bizarre attack upon vulnerable working people," AMWU Victorian Secretary Steve Dargavel said.

Senators Ricky Muir, John Madigan, Nick Xenophon, Glenn Lazarus and Dio Wang and MP Clive Palmer have committed to rejecting the FEG changes. The Palmer United Party have confirmed they now have a party position to oppose the changes. Labor, the Greens and Cathy McGowan are also opposed to the FEG amendments which would cut redundancy payments to a maximum of 16weeks.

TCFUA National Secretary Michele O'Neil said: "This is an important decision by the Senators and PUP because it shows they are prepared to stand up for working people facing hardship."

"The Government's plans target the victims of corporate collapse by slashing FEG payments and the Senators have rejected this bad and heartless policy."

FEG is a vital safety net for workers left high and dry when companies they work for crash, leaving no money to pay owed entitlements. Under FEG, the Federal Government provides employees with money for some unpaid wages, accrued annual leave, leave loading, long-service leave, and redundancy payments based on their years of service.

Unions are calling on the government to instead take action against unscrupulous business operators who avoid paying debts and employee entitlements.

"Workers and their families will be looking to the cross bench to continue to stick with them and vote against the Abbott Government's anti-worker agenda," ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said.

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



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“Workers can’t afford Tony Abbott’s plans to cut their wages, conditions and redundancy payments.

“We know that the Abbott Government is determined to deliver what business and employers want, and swing the pendulum back to them.”

AMWU Victorian Secretary Steve Dargavel and TCFUA National Secretary Michele O'Neil are available for interview.

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