

Thursday, 13 August 2015

Biased Royal Commission into trade unions must be terminated

The Royal Commission into Trade Unions must be shut down following the revelation Justice Dyson Heydon is billed as a guest speaker at an upcoming Liberal Party fundraiser.

It is untenable for the former judge charged with overseeing the royal commission to display such biased and political behaviour in what is a clear conflict of interest.

When appointing Justice Dyson Heydon to the role, Tony Abbott said you could “trust his judgement”.

However, deciding to speak at a Liberal Party fundraiser demonstrates a lack of judgement with a decision that appears biased, partisan and flawed.

The ACTU has always maintained that the Royal Commission is an \$80 million political witch hunt orchestrated by the Abbott Government to undermine its political opponents – this revelation is further proof.

This Royal Commission has no claim to independence, impartiality or adherence to due process. Justice Dyson Heydon’s decision to help raise funds for the Liberal Party is merely the latest example.

Other examples of bias from the Royal Commission include:

- Determining last year that it had finalised its inquiry yet caving in to government pressure and intervention by the Attorney-General to extend the inquiry for another year
- Leaking prejudicial information to the media before its public release
- Releasing a "discussion paper" to media before public release with content recommending various new laws that align closely with Liberal Party policies such as those in the Registered Organisations Bill rejected by the Parliament in March
- Subjecting a former spouse of a Labor leader to its inquiries
- Failing to afford union witnesses natural justice by making serious allegations without proper notice and not allowing those witnesses to properly respond
- Disregarding objections from legal representatives that the Commission has gone beyond the parameters of the terms of reference

The Abbott Government must terminate the Royal Commission for the political witch hunt that it is.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver:

“The ACTU calls on the Abbott Government to shut down the Royal Commission, which has been proven to be an \$80 million dollar political witch hunt.

“It is untenable that the former judge charged with overseeing the Royal Commission is helping to fundraise for the Liberal Party.”

“The ACTU has always maintained that the Royal Commission is about attacking the ability of unions to deliver outcomes for working people – jobs, wages, conditions and safety. This latest example of bias is further proof.”

“This is another ‘captain’s call’ by Tony Abbott to recklessly waste \$80 million of taxpayer money on his own political agenda.”

Media contact: Kara Douglas, 0418 793 885 or Carla De Campo, 0410 579 575