

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

## New report on AI recommends stronger rights and protections for workers

The ACTU welcomes recommendations to strengthen workplace rights outlined in the newly released report by the House Standing Committee's Inquiry into the Digital Transformation of Workplaces.

The Committee's report calls for stronger protections against intrusive employer surveillance, new worker consultation measures, and improved rights for workers to control their own data, including banning employer use of high-risk data as well as the sale of personal data to third parties.

The report recognises the potential benefits of AI for workers but also highlights the risks of employers exploiting new technologies to undermine wages and conditions. Other recommendations include permitting greater transparency and ensuring clarity on employer liability for decisions made with AI and automated decision-making (ADM) tools.

With the federal election fast approaching, the report provides further evidence of the risks posed by the Coalition's commitment to repeal workplace rights and protections.

The weakening of workplace protections risks empowering companies to undermine working people's wages and conditions, especially in an increasingly digitised future.

Unions argue that worker-centric laws are necessary for AI to lift people's living standards and allow productivity gains from new technologies to be shared more evenly.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU Assistant Secretary, Joseph Mitchell:

"The adoption of new technologies should benefit all Australians, not just big business.

"The union movement wants the fair go protected in the age of AI, so we welcome the Albanese Government's forward-thinking approach in this important space.

"The recommendations support a core principle of Australian Unions – that everyone should have a say over their wages and conditions at their workplace. We can't risk our rights at work being stripped away by Peter Dutton, especially given the growing use and misuse of AI by powerful companies.

"Too often, we have seen AI used by multinational giants to undermine workers' wages and conditions. Whether it's workplace surveillance or using algorithms to sack workers, bosses should be accountable for decisions made using AI models and tools.

"Workers deserve greater transparency over AI adoption and the collection of personal data by their bosses. There should be no decision about us without us.

"As the federal election approaches, it's clear that our rights at work are at serious risk of being taken away. Employer groups argue that workers don't deserve to be front and centre in AI decision-making in their workplace. These are the same big business lobbyists pushing Peter Dutton to scrap penalty rates and take away other workplace rights if he is elected. Australians can't risk weaker workplace rights, especially in the age of AI."

**ENDS**

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