
United
Services
Union
Submission
to Fair
Work
Australia

Submission into the
Senate Education &
Employment Committees
Inquiry into the Fair
Work (Registered
Organisations)
Amendment Bill 2013

January 2014

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The New South Wales Local Government, Clerical, Administrative, Energy, Airlines & Utilities Union (USU) is one of the largest unions in NSW, representing over 30,000 members. The USU is the New South Wales branch of the ASU and is a registered organisation for the purposes of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment Bill 2013* and as such, has a direct and immediate interest in ensuring that the bill is fair and effective.

The Union has serious concerns about the bill including the following:

- i. The bill creates significant risks and disincentives for involvement of lay union leadership, and will lead to less democracy in unions.
- ii. The penalties set out in the bill are punitive and excessive
- iii. The bill does not take into account the fact that Registered Organisations are often led, at least in part, by volunteers. The bill would expose volunteers in leadership and decision-making positions to substantial financial risk.
- iv. It is difficult to support the creation of a new agency, the Registered Organisations Ombudsman, without any understanding of its potential funding, resourcing or membership.
- v. The bill does not achieve the effect curtailing the examples of corruption and misconduct which have been seen in some Registered Organisations.
- vi. The bill would place a significant new administrative burden on Registered Organisations, and detract from the available resources for representing the interests of members.
- vii. The USU pursues a best practice approach to financial practices. We value transparency and accountability to our membership. As this is the case for most Registered Organisations, the bill is largely unnecessary.

The Union supports the rejection of the bill in its current form.

The Union has had the opportunity to read the submissions by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) and Unions NSW. The Union supports the contents of both submissions.

In circumstances where the government seeks to pursue changes to the current compliance framework for registered organisations, the USU would support a review of the proposed legislation by way of a bipartisan panel with representatives from peak Union and Employer bodies. In the absence of such a panel, the USU maintains its concern that the proposed changes will provide an unnecessary administrative burden to Registered Organisations and their leaders whilst failing to prevent serious cases of misconduct.

Please do not hesitate to contact Mark Dunstan of this office on (02) 9265 8216 should you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Kelly, General Secretary
per Casey Young, Senior Industrial Officer