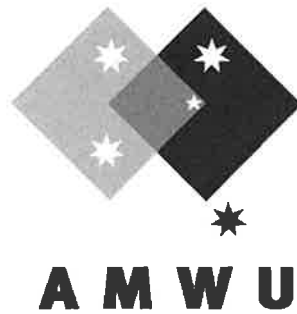


AUSTRALIAN MANUFACTURING WORKERS' UNION



Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment
Inquiry into the
Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment Bill 2013
November 2013

AMWU

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About the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union

1. The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) is registered as the "Automotive, Food, Metals, Engineering, Printing and Kindred Industries Union". The AMWU represents around 100,000 members working across major sectors of the Australian economy, including in the manufacturing sectors of vehicle building and parts supply, engineering, printing and paper products and food manufacture. Our members are engaged in maintenance services work across all industry sectors. We cover many employees throughout the resources sector, mining, aviation, aerospace and building and construction industries. We also cover members in the technical and supervisory occupations across diverse industries including food technology and construction. The AMWU has members at all skills and classifications from entry level to degree.
2. The AMWU's purpose is to improve member's entitlements and conditions at work, including supporting wage increases, reasonable and social hours of work and protecting minimum award standards. In its history the union has campaigned for many employee entitlements that are now a feature of Australian workplaces, including occupational health and safety protections, annual leave, long service leave, paid public holidays, parental leave, penalty and overtime rates and loadings, and superannuation.

Submission

3. The AMWU makes the following submissions to the Senate Standing Committee inquiry opposing the passing of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment Bill* 2013 into law.
4. As an affiliate of the Australian Council of Trade Unions' submissions (ACTU), these submissions are in addition to and wholly supportive of the ACTU.
5. Any changes to the regulation of industrial associations must support unions to perform their primary function of protecting and improving entitlements and conditions for employees.
6. The Minister's second reading speech acknowledges, "Unions and employer associations who operate in the workplace relations field play a critical role in workplaces and the economy."
7. In order to support Unions to perform their function the regulation should support democracy and participation in union decision making structures, and be suited to member based not-for-profit organisations.
8. Given that the regulation has only just been changed by the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment Act* 2012 to require new standards of financial management and the tripling of penalties for breaches, there should be an opportunity to assess these changes before making further changes.
9. Prime Minister Abbott when he was the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, said of his own Registered Organisations reforms, "This is a genuine exercise in finding common ground." Finding common ground between employer association, unions and interested parties should continue to be the approach taken. Any proposed changes should be done through a proper consultative process with registered organisations and developed with a view to achieving consensus.

Institutional and historical Knowledge

10. If the proposed *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment Bill* 2013 passes into law, the Senate should recommend to the Government that it take steps to ensure that the institutional and historical knowledge and capabilities that been developed are retained and transferred to the proposed Registered Organisations Commission.
11. The AMWU's experience has been that there is significant institutional knowledge in the Fair Work Commission around the conduct of elections and annual returns. In providing guidance to organisations in the future about obligations, this institutional experience would be of great benefit to industrial associations going forward.

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