

## Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

#### Outcome 2 - Workplace Relations and Economic Strategy

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-000848

Senator Di Natale provided in writing.

#### Question

##### Migrant Workers - employer penalties

With reference to some of the other actions announced by the government in relation to migrant workers:

Increasing penalties that apply to employers who underpay workers and who fail to keep proper employment records. A new higher penalty category of 'serious contraventions' will be introduced, and will apply to any employer that has intentionally ripped off workers, regardless of the employer's size.

- What is the status of these penalties?
- Has a new bill been drafted?
- What is the time line?

#### Answer

A bill to implement the Government's Protecting Vulnerable Workers Policy is currently being drafted. It will include the policy to increase the civil penalties that apply to employers who underpay workers and who fail to keep proper employment records, along with a new higher penalty category of 'serious contraventions'.

Consultations to inform the development of the bill were held with representatives from employer groups, unions, community groups and academics on 24 and 25 October 2016.

In accordance with standard practice for amendments to the *Fair Work Act 2009*, a draft bill will be considered by a meeting of the Committee on Industrial Legislation in early December 2016.

The Government expects to introduce this legislation into Parliament in early 2017.