

EPSU joins global demand to stop draconian Australian laws that criminalise unions

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Australian Unions

Stop Morrison's Attack on
Working People and Our
Unions

Take action

Take Action

Scott Morrison's Union Busting Bill is extreme, unnecessary, and will make it harder for workers to win pay rises and protect their jobs.

(14 November 2019) The Australian Senate is considering the so-called “Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring integrity) Bill 2019. EPSU has asked the senators to vote against the bill. It is detrimental to the interests of workers.

The legislation attacks the rights of workers to join, run and be represented by the union of their choice. This legislation violates international conventions, standards and jurisprudence as laid down by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and goes against the international human rights treaties and covenants of the UN, all of which have been signed and ratified by Australia. EPSU has pointed out to the senators that the legislation raises serious questions about the commitments of Australia in the ongoing discussions on the EU-Australia Free Trade Agreement. Australia has committed to defend and promote the interests of workers and not to weaken those. A final trade agreement will have to pass the European Parliament

and the Council of Ministers of the EU. Parliament and Council attach importance to respect for international labour standards.

For background

Full background is available on Australian Unions (the Confederation) - and [to take action](#)

Main elements of the legislation include:

- The bill would permit any party with “sufficient interest”, a definition that could include an employer or business lobby group, as well as the government’s own ministers — to apply to have an elected union official disqualified, and the union itself placed into administration or shut down.
- It introduces a “fit and proper person test” which would enable trade unions officials to be disqualified or barred from running if they’ve committed minor technical infractions, like filing paperwork late or not giving enough notice for a worksite inspection.
- These draconian regulations around conduct would apply exclusively to union officials — there are no equivalent measures being discussed in relation to corporations, employers, politicians, or other branches of Australian civil society.
- The bill also introduces a “public interest test” on union mergers, removing the right of union members to democratically decide the shape of their own organisation.

The bill will impact of work place safety in which trade union representatives play an important role. It interferes with the right of unions to join, run and be represented by the union of their choice.

The Ensuring Integrity Bill violates the ILO’s fundamental conventions on [Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise](#) (nr. 87) and on [The Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining](#) (no 98)

ITUC and PSI have sent similar letters to the Australian senators asking them to reject the bill

[For the information from PSI](#)

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