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Calombaris gets \$200,000 fine for \$7.8m theft

George Calombaris has again been exposed as one of Australia's leading wage thieves, stealing \$7.8 million from workers in his restaurants.

Despite being found to have stolen millions of dollars Calombaris will only be asked to repay the money he stole and pay a \$200,000 fine to the Fair Work Commission.

While anyone else would face prison time for theft of millions of dollars, employers routinely steal huge amounts from working people and get away with simply returning the money they have stolen and paying a poultry fine.

Union members in Calombaris's restaurants have been working tirelessly for years to expose the rampant theft and exploitation on which he has built his empire. The revelations this week come on the heels of wage theft being exposed by HospoVoice members at Hochi Mama.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"If anyone stole \$7.8 million and got caught they would expect to spend a long time in prison, but when you're an employer and you steal from your workers all you have to do is pay it back. This needs to change.

"Wage theft is systemic across entire industries. We need harsher penalties, directors to be held responsible for their actions, rights for unions to access workplaces and ensure that workers are being paid correctly.

"We also need a simple, accessible process for workers to claim back wages that they have had stolen.

"The Government is doing nothing to address wage theft, or the integrity of employers, and instead is focused on legislation which attacks working people and is so extreme that it has no equivalent in the western world.

"This isn't an isolated incident or an oversight by a handful of employers, this is a business model for the retail and hospitality sectors and we need to change the law to change behavior.

"The work that is being done by union members to fight back against wage theft is outstanding and will lead to lasting change. Workers in Calombaris's restaurants have been fighting for years to expose him and their win today is a huge encouragement to all other workers who are having wages stolen. You can stand together and win against any boss."

ENDS

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