

Thursday 3 March 2022

Agreement terminations used to cut wages

The Morrison Government is refusing to act as more and more employers threaten to terminate agreements in the lead up to the election in an attempt to force working people to accept significant cuts to pay and conditions.

ACTU President Michele O’Neil will be joined today in Sydney by Qantas flight attendants and members from the FAAA and TWU, as well as CFMEU Manufacturing Division members from Tuftmaster Carpets who are all facing agreement termination applications from their employers - some of whom will also be giving evidence to the Senate Inquiry into the aviation industry.

The threat by an employer to terminate an agreement and throw workers back onto award rates – which in many cases would mean massive pay cuts of up to 50 per cent – puts far too much leverage in the hands of employers during the bargaining process.

The Morrison Government could act to oppose these attempts and support the pay rises for workers that we need to propel the economy out of the pandemic, but has instead chosen to support employers seeking to terminate agreements.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O’Neil:

“Seeking to terminate an agreement as a tactic to intimidate workers and force them to accept an agreement which would cut their wages and slash conditions has become a systemic issue under this Government, with more and more employers seeking to use this strategy.

“When employers can threaten massive cuts to pay and conditions – as Qantas and Tuftmaster have done – it gives employers a blunt weapon in what it meant to be a fair bargaining process.

“The Morrison Government should be fixing our system to make it fairer for working people, not intervening to support employers that are slashing pay and conditions during a pandemic.

“Qantas is seeking to slash the wages of the same workers who volunteered to work on flights rescuing stranded Australians in the first weeks of the pandemic when little was known about the virus or the risks it posed.

“Tuftmaster Carpets are attempting to cut the wages and redundancy pay of workers who have worked tirelessly through the pandemic and deserve a pay rise, not the threat of massive cuts to their wages and conditions.”

Media contact: Peter Green 0400 764 200