

AFP investigation

The Minister has related there is an AFP investigation underway in regards to the disclosure to media of the service of a warrant obtained by the Registered Organisations Commission in respect of its investigation of the Australian Workers Union.

My Agency welcomes the AFP investigation.

On 27 October 2017 I appointed a senior officer of the Fair Work Ombudsman to liaise with the AFP on behalf of the Fair Work Ombudsman.

The Fair Work Ombudsman has cooperated with the investigation and sought direction from the AFP as to the appropriate steps we can take to support the investigation. I have also extended support to staff the Fair Work Ombudsman Registered Organisations Commission Entity affected by the investigation.

The integrity of the ongoing AFP investigation is a matter the Fair Work Ombudsman takes extremely seriously. It is not appropriate for me or for any of my officers to discuss any issues that may fall within the scope of that investigation.

Public Interest Immunity

The Minister has also related to the claim an Public Interest Immunity, by the attorney general.

In the event that the Committee should ask me any questions that, in my opinion, may relate to or impact on the ongoing AFP Investigation I intend to rely on the public interest immunity claim made by the Attorney General.

FWOROCE staff

This matter has been the subject of significant media attention. Members of my staff have been personally named in media speculation and in parliamentary proceedings in relation to this matter. These comments have included assertions about individuals' employment history and sought to draw inferences based on that history.

The Fair Work Ombudsman Registered Organisations Commission Entity is made up of committed, hardworking, impartial and professional public servants. They are people who have come from a range of backgrounds – including unions, lawfirms, employer organisations, community organisations, government and private industry. Our capacity to serve the public is strengthened by our diversity.

Irrespective of their employment history, all staff at the Fair Work Ombudsman share a genuine desire to support compliant, productive and inclusive Australian workplaces. They contribute to this everyday through their work.

And all staff of the Agency are required to adhere to the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct and behave in an impartial manner.

I'm very proud to lead the work of my Agency and of the continued commitment, dedication and passion shown by my staff in carrying out their work.