

As you know I appeared by teleconference at the Senate Hearing yesterday with my colleague Martijn Boersma. I am not sure if this is allowed but we would like the opportunity to add to our response to the last question posed during the Senate Committee hearing, concerning the limited capacity of workers at the bottom end of supply chains to engage in enterprise bargaining as follows:

*The current emphasis on enterprise bargaining in the Australian industrial relations system means that cleaners are not able to bargain with the companies at the top of supply chains which put out the tender for the cleaning contract. In other words, cleaners cannot bargain with the companies that ultimately determine their pay and conditions. One way that would allow workers to negotiate with companies at the top of supply chains is through industry-level rather than enterprise level bargaining. Industry-level bargaining would ensure that vulnerable workers such as cleaners could negotiate uniform conditions across industries and supply chains. This would eliminate labour costs the key determinant for awarding contracts, limiting the 'race-to-the-bottom' in wages and conditions.*