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Fair Work
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Joint Media Statement of the General Manager of the Fair Work Commission and The Australian Workers' Union

21 Dec 2023

On 21 December 2023 the Federal Court of Australia imposed a civil penalty totalling \$290,000 on The Australian Workers' Union (AWU) for 27,140 contraventions of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009*.

The contraventions covered a nine-year period between 2009 and 2017, during which the AWU admitted that it did not meet its statutory obligations to keep accurate copies of its membership register.

The AWU and the General Manager of the Fair Work Commission (the Commission), Murray Furlong, reached an agreed position on the penalty to be imposed by the Court. The AWU understands the importance of its compliance obligations, including those relating to keeping and providing accurate information for its members.


The AWU admitted the contraventions alleged by the General Manager in this proceeding at the first available opportunity after the proceeding was commenced. There was no intent to contravene its statutory obligations.

Since 2017 the AWU has taken significant steps to remedy its non-compliance and reporting obligations. It has implemented permanent policy and structural changes to facilitate ongoing compliance with its statutory obligations both at a national level and Branch level.

These policies and structural changes are subject to continued review by the National Executive to ensure the AWU is consistently achieving its compliance obligations. To achieve these reforms, the

National Executive has worked closely with the relevant Branches so as to ensure a seamless and effective transition by each Branch to the AWU's approach to membership data management.

The AWU and the Commission's General Manager have agreed to make this joint statement.

Further details in relation to the matter can be located in the Federal Court of Australia's online file, which is available here: [NSD992/2022](https://www.comcourts.gov.au/file/Federal/P/NSD992/2022/actions) 

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