



WE STAND FOR WORKING PEOPLE. ALWAYS.

8 September 2017

Senator Linda Reynolds
Chair, Senate Education & Employment Legislation Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

**Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment
Senate Inquiry into the Ensuring Integrity Bill**

Dear Senator,

I write to make a submission to the Senate Inquiry into the 'Ensuring Integrity' Bill on behalf of UnionsACT. UnionsACT refers to and wholeheartedly supports the detailed submission made by the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

UnionsACT is the peak council representing 24 unions and over 33,000 working people, their families and communities. One hundred thousand more have their conditions of employment shaped by the work of our affiliates. More than 15,000 Canberrans support the work we do through our community campaigning.

We have a long and proud history of independently and fearlessly advocating on behalf of union members, and our mission is to improve working standards and living standards for all working people.

We note that the Explanatory Memorandum makes reference to the Royal Commission into Trade Unions, noting that the intent of the Bill is to "combat a culture of lawlessness". However, UnionsACT believes that the Bill goes far beyond the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Further, we do not believe the Government has made a public policy case for the proposed changes, which are far reaching and extreme. Finally, the EM refers to examples from the Royal Commission of inappropriate behaviour by union officials, but the vast majority of those examples, when tested in courts, have not been upheld, not resulted in prosecutions, or have been found to be without merit.

In particular, we would like to highlight the Government's double-standard with this Bill, which creates a regulatory regime, including penalties and disqualification, that does not apply to corporations. Unions are non-profit, member-run organisations, yet the Government's Bill would create a stricter requirement for unions than officeholders and directors of multinational corporations.



UnionsACT does not support the Bill. We believe that this Bill is an example of bad public policy, bad law making, and amounts to little more than an attempt to undermine and weaken unions.

Yours sincerely

Alex White

Secretary

UnionsACT