



**Submission to Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and  
Education Legislation Committee**

**Inquiry into the provisions of the Independent Contractors Bill 2006  
and Workplace Relations Legislation Amendment  
(Independent Contractors) Bill 2006**

The Secretary,  
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee  
Department of the Senate  
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Dear Senators,

I am writing to express my concerns about the abovementioned Bills and their implications for outworkers in the textile, clothing and footwear industries.

In a media release dated 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2006 the Minister for Workplace Relations, Kevin Andrews, made the commitment to “maintain the status of Textile Clothing and Footwear outworkers as employees under State legislation”. Several aspects of the Bills suggest that this is not the case.

The Independent Contractors Bills provide various loopholes that employers could utilise to treat outworkers as independent contractors, and which undermine the industry-wide monitoring established to bring an end to the exploitation of outworkers.

These include the provision for occasions when the State laws can be avoided and regulations that can be made which undermine the operation of these State laws. In addition, Part 4 of the Bill introduces the notion of “contract outworkers” nationally, effectively removing the protections inherent in an outworker's employee status.

I call on the Senate to demand amendments to these Bills so that they truly reflect Minister Andrews' promise to protect the employment status of outworkers.

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