



MEDIA RELEASE

Interns Australia welcomes Labor election commitment to address unfair, unpaid internships

Thursday, 30 June 2016

Interns Australia, the peak body representing interns in Australia, has today welcomed Labor's election commitment to begin to address the exploitation of young people in unpaid and underpaid internships in Australia.

The announcement comes amid growing concern over the number of young people undertaking internships who are not being paid for their work.

Under the commitment, if elected Labor will work with stakeholders including Interns Australia to:

- clarify the definition of internship, which is increasingly used to attract young interns into jobs which should be paid
- ensure that unpaid internships are not being used to replace real jobs
- provide an additional \$22.9m in resources to the Fair Work Ombudsman to amp up its work to protect interns from exploitation

Interns Australia research shows that only 12.72 per cent of internships are paid in Australia, despite less than 40 per cent being undertaken for course credit, which exempts employers from having to pay a wage.

"We are pleased to see the first recognition by a political party of the need to swiftly address the use of young people's labour in unpaid and underpaid internships," said Dimity Mannering, Executive Director of Interns Australia.

"There is significant concern that unclear work laws and huge competition for jobs among young people is creating an environment where real jobs are increasingly being renamed internships. If we do not address this problem, we risk creating a generation of 'forever interns' who do real work but never receive a wage for it."

The announcement follows a \$272,000 fine being imposed on a Sydney business for disguising employees as unpaid interns. The interns were undertaking work including cleaning, office admin, event organising and magazine editing.

In May, the Government announced the Youth Jobs PaTH program, as part of which 120,000 internships will be made available to young job seekers in return for extra \$200 per fortnight on their welfare payments for up to 50 hours interning.

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For more information, interviews or comment, please contact:

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About Interns Australia

Founded in 2013, Interns Australia is the national advocacy body representing interns and work placement students. We work to engage and empower interns, employers, government and other stakeholders to create an employment landscape that is fair, regulated and protects the dignity of interns. Interns Australia is apolitical and independently funded.