

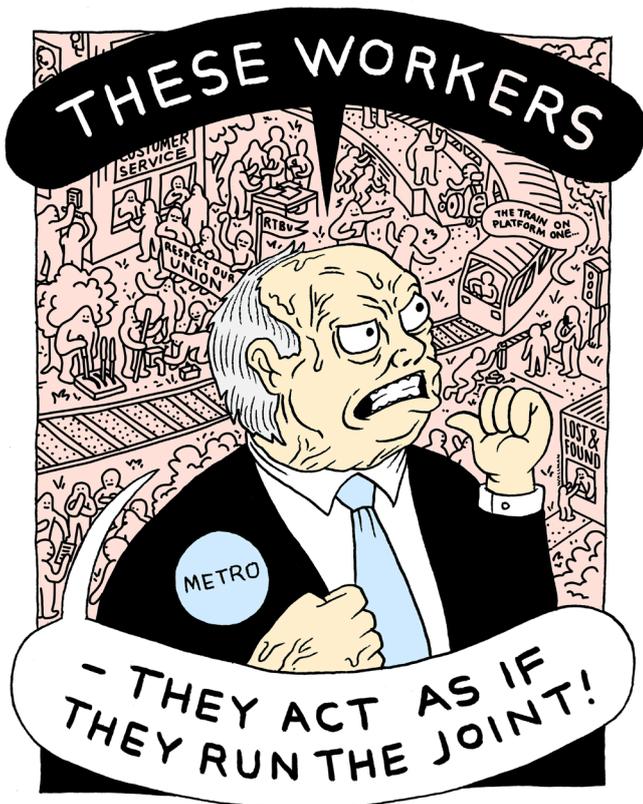
# WORKERS SOLIDARITY

BULLETIN · ISSUE 1

Welcome to the new fortnightly Workers Solidarity Bulletin. Workers Solidarity's objective is to rebuild a fighting union movement, and we want to achieve this by promoting solidarity *by* workers, organised *as* workers. Our first edition will feature an analysis about the Ensuring Integrity Bill, and the likely impact it will have if we don't fight to defeat it.

Because this publication is new, we also welcome your feedback, so tell us what you think by sending us an email to:

[we.are.workers.solidarity@gmail.com](mailto:we.are.workers.solidarity@gmail.com)



## WORKERS IN STRUGGLE

### RTBU - Yarra Trams

The RTBU has been bargaining with Yarra Trams since March. The dispute centres on pay and the employer wanting to raise the cap on part-time employment. Another two 4 hour stoppages have been scheduled (26 September and 10 October). Meanwhile, the train Division of the union is heading to the Federal Court to have orders to halt industrial action against Metro Trains rescinded. The Division will be discussing their EA at a mass meeting on Friday 4 October.

### CFMEU - GBar

Asbestos removal workers at GBar have been on strike since July. Workers are not getting the correct rate of pay, leave loading or travel allowances. They are also not being provided with adequate safety equipment. Workers have been threatened via text message that their jobs "may not be there" if they do not accept GBar's offer.

Donate to the strike fund at:  
<https://gbar.raisely.com/>

### ETU/AMWU - OI Glass

Workers at OI Glass in Melbourne and Brisbane are taking industrial action. The dispute centres on OI's stubborn refusal of a pay rise and maintaining conditions. OI glass has been actively recruiting scab labour, and threatening to lock out workers and terminate the agreement.

You can contribute to the strike funds here:

ETU <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-the-striking-etu-members-at-oi-glass>

AMWU [https://www.amwu.org.au/vic\\_oi\\_glass](https://www.amwu.org.au/vic_oi_glass)

A picket is being held on Fridays from 7am at 20-40 Booker St, Spotswood, supporters welcome

## BACKBONE OF OUR MOVEMENT



**Amedeo D'Aparno / Campaigns, Communications & industrial officer at the Rail Tram & Bus Union**

**How long have you been a union member?** Since I got my first job out of school.

**Why did you join the union?** I had just started on the job and we were going through an enterprise agreement campaign. As a young worker, having an experienced delegate approach me and explain the way the collective worked got me signed up, but taking little actions of defiance and seeing the results really got me involved! One in, all in.

**What's your best memory/story about being in the union movement?** A highlight was the outcome of the first Victorian heavy rail strike in 18 years in 2015. With thousands of Metro workers walking off the job, the action brought us together and empowered members to stand up, creating a zest for many to get more involved in union organising.

**What's the most important issue facing the union movement today?** We often say that it's about anti-worker/anti-union laws. As bad as those are - and unions should organise to change them - they're largely a consequence rather than a cause. There are unions around the world organising under more oppressive legislation, and against far more oppressive governments than we do in Australia.

What's needed is less focus on legislation, and a more concerted effort to support local direct action in workplaces, support member participation, and not just stand up and fight, but be smarter than the bosses in how we go about it.

**Why should people join their union?** Because they make us stronger! By standing together we can take control of our the labour power we sell. Corporations try to organise us, but I reckon we can organise ourselves pretty good.



## ANALYSIS

**The Ensuring Integrity Bill is an attack on every union member**

The Ensuring Integrity Bill is a new law proposed by the Federal Government to attack our unions, our ability to organise, and our long fought for wages and conditions.

Australia is edging towards a recession. During recessions, the bosses squeeze workers - they do this by increasing our hours without increasing our wages, by expecting us to work overtime for free, by reducing our conditions and by making our workplaces more unsafe. Workers will need to fight together to ensure that the bosses don't steal our wages and conditions in order to safekeep their billions in profit.

The Ensuring Integrity Bill is the latest in a long series of attacks on our fighting movement. In 2006, the Liberal government introduced Work Choices, in 2014, Tony Abbott called a Royal Commission into Australian unions, and now this.

The Ensuring Integrity Bill (the Bill) has four major areas. These include:

- Provisions for disqualifying union officials
- Expanded grounds for deregistering unions
- A scheme that allows the government to appoint administrators to "dysfunctional" unions
- And new ways to stop union mergers.

**/ Every aspect of the Ensuring Integrity Bill is designed to disrupt our unions and stop us organising effectively /**

The government claims that these new laws are about protecting union members. In reality these changes are all about allowing bosses and the governments to interfere with the operation of democratically elected unions, and stop our ability to effectively fight back against job losses and wage cuts.

If this Bill passes, it would create a wide range of reasons a union official could be disqualified (basically sacked and prohibited from representing workers).

Bosses, business lobby groups, the government, or any number of other people could apply to have a union official disqualified. Union officials could be disqualified not just for breaches of the Fair Work Act, but for minor breaches of any law, and even civil offenses. If this Bill passes, a boss could apply to have a union official disqualified if they've been caught twice driving without a license.

Recent history shows us that the bosses and the Fair Work Commission can always find some reason to claim we have broken the law. If the Ensuring Integrity Bill passes, bosses, industry lobby groups and the government will be able to use these provisions to sack the union leaders that we have elected.

But the government doesn't just want the power to sack union leaders it doesn't like, it wants the power to smash whole unions.



The Ensuring Integrity Bill expands the grounds for deregistering a union to include non-compliance with orders or injunctions, or where "obstructive" (unprotected) industrial action has taken place. An application for deregistration could be made by any person with a sufficient interest - so any boss inconvenienced by strike action could ask the government to deregister a union.

Under the Ensuring Integrity Bill, if you walk off the job because of health and safety concerns, the union could be walking into deregistration proceedings. If deregistration wasn't enough, the government could also use this bill to appoint "administrators" to run our unions.

The Bill allows anyone with a sufficient interest - so again that's bosses, industry groups, and the government itself - to apply to have administrators appointed to run any 'dysfunctional union'. This is the government and employers' conspiring to seize control of the unions, run them into the ground, and stop us from organising through union structures.

The Bill would also make it harder for unions to merge. The Bill creates a 'Public Interest Test' for mergers. Before a union could merge, the Fair Work Commission would have to decide whether the merger is in the public interest

by considering things such as the impact the merger would have on industries and the economy. In other words, this bill would remove the right of union members to decide whether a merger is in their best interests. Instead, the Fair Work Commission would consult bosses, lobby groups and the government to decide whether the merger was in the "public interest."

Every aspect of the Ensuring Integrity Bill is designed to disrupt our unions and stop us organising effectively. Our unity is our strength, we have power because of our organisation. If we are not able to organise, then we won't be able to fight effectively for pay, conditions and safety on the job.

The government claims that the Ensuring Integrity Bill is about protecting union members. In reality this bill would allow bosses, business lobby groups and the government to interfere in every aspect of union business. They would be able to disqualify union officials, deregister unions, appoint administrators to take over unions, and stop union mergers.

The Ensuring Integrity Bill must be stopped. We must fight to end this union busting legislation. Speak to your union organiser about how your union is fighting this. And come along to the Workers Solidarity Conference to discuss strategies and actions to rebuild a fighting union movement.

**ANALYSIS**

## **WHAT'S ON**

### **Workers Solidarity fortnightly meeting**

6pm Thursday 3rd October  
Victorian Trades Hall

### **Reproductive Justice Rally - Counter the "March For The Babies"**

12:30 Saturday 12th October  
Parliament of Victoria

### **Workers Solidarity Conference: Rebuilding A Fighting Union Movement**

10am - 4pm Sunday 20th October  
Free event

Register and find venue info:

[workerssolidarity.org/conference](http://workerssolidarity.org/conference)

workerssolidarity.org.au/conference

Registration & venue info

# WORKERS SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE



## *REBUILDING A FIGHTING UNION MOVEMENT*

Where are we at?  
What do we need?  
How do we build it?

**SUNDAY 20 OCT  
2019 10AM - 4PM**

Union delegates, HSRs,  
organisers and activists are  
invited to attend.

we.are.workers.solidarity@gmail.com / 0411054859 (sms only)

For further information contact