Unions welcome wage theft inquiry

UNIONSWA

Media Release

UnionsWA has welcomed the announcement today by the WA Government of an inquiry into wage theft and the appointment of Tony Beech, former Chief Commissioner of the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission as its head.

Meredith Hammat, Secretary, UnionsWA said:

“Regular, intentional and unlawful under-payment of wages – wage theft – can have devastating consequences for working people.

“It is widespread but often hidden because of intimidation and because vulnerable workers are often affected - young people, those in insecure work or those born overseas, including workers with only temporary work visa rights such as students and tourists.

“Victims can be left with little or no income from wages and may be unable to claim Centrelink income support.

“Understandably people are very distressed by such theft; their confidence in employers, workplaces and our laws is harmed.

“Employers who engage in wage theft are not just making unintended mistakes.

“They are often also evading their obligations to provide workers’ compensation and superannuation.

“This inquiry, headed by former Chief Commissioner of the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission, Tony Beech, is welcome.

“He is a fair-minded and credible person for this important job.

“To stop wage theft a range of strategies will be needed – strong laws, effective policing, punishment of criminals and protections for whistle-blowers.”

Further information

“Jess” (not real name) talks about her experience as the victim of wage theft: https://soundcloud.com/a-better-life-wa/wage-theft-publishable-audio

“Ryan” (no0 real name) talks about his experience of wage theft: https://youtu.be/S5cUf4ecNms

A collection of recently documented instances of wage theft in WA can be downloaded or viewed online here
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Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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