

THU 08 AUGUST 2019

Daily Media Overview



S22



COPYRIGHT This report and its contents are for the internal research use of Mediaportal subscribers only and must not be provided to any third party by any means for any purpose without the express permission of Isentia and/or the relevant copyright owner. For more information contact copyright@isentia.com

DISCLAIMER Isentia makes no representations and, to the extent permitted by law, excludes all warranties in relation to the information contained in the report and is not liable for any losses, costs or expenses, resulting from any use or misuse of the report.

Everyone benefits from better union oversight

Daily Telegraph, Sydney, General News, James Pearson

08 Aug 2019

Page 26 • 623 words • ASR AUD 14,551 • Photo: No • Type: News Item • Size: 286.00 cm² • NSW • Australia • Crime Prevention, Enforcement & ACLEI - Press • ID: 1155857766

With the Ensuring Integrity Bill on its way to the Senate after it was passed by the House of Representatives last week, union bosses are in the media and pacing the halls of parliament, trying to convince anyone who will listen, that the Government's reintroduced legislation is an attack on John Setka that will hurt workers more broadly. These are the same workers who, during the Heydon Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption, heard of union officials like Derrick Belan, the then secretary of the National Union of Workers (NUW) going on a \$650,000 union members funded personal lavish cash splash on tattoos, cosmetic procedures, luxury cruises, divorce lawyers, weight loss surgery, indoor skydiving and subscriptions to a dating site.

[View original](#) - [Full text: 623 word\(s\), ~2 mins](#)

Audience

232,067 CIRCULATION

Keywords

Australian(1),Commission(2),Corruption(1),Federal(2),Government(1),Integrity(5),measures(1),National(1),organisations(3),Services(1),worker(1),workers(9)



08 Aug 2019

Daily Telegraph, Sydney

Author: James Pearson • Section: General News • Article type : News Item

Classification : Capital City Daily • Audience : 232,067 • Page: 26

Printed Size: 286.00cm² • Region: NSW • Market: Australia • ASR: AUD 14,551

Words: 623 • Item ID: 1155857766

Licensed by Copyright Agency. You may only copy or communicate this work with a licence.

Page 1 of 1

[back](#)

Everyone benefits from better union oversight



With the Ensuring Integrity Bill on its way to the Senate after it was passed by the House of Representatives last week, union bosses are in the media and pacing the halls of parliament, trying to convince anyone who will listen, that the Government's reintroduced legislation is an attack on John Setka that will hurt workers more broadly.

These are the same workers who, during the Heydon Royal Commission into Trade Union Governance and Corruption, heard of union officials like Derrick Belan, the then secretary of the National Union of Workers (NUW) going on a \$650,000 union members funded personal lavish cash splash on tattoos, cosmetic procedures, luxury cruises, divorce lawyers, weight loss surgery, indoor skydiving and subscriptions to a dating site.

These are the same workers who, during the Royal Commission, found out about the conduct of James McGiveron and Richard Burton, officials from the Transport Workers' Unions (TWU), who thought it appropriate to part with more than \$300,000 of union member funds to buy luxury utes for personal use.

And who can forget one of the longest-running union scandals, involving former Health Services Union (HSU) official Craig Thompson, who was found guilty of misusing union funded credit cards on porn, prostitutes and payments.

These self-indulgent expenses were all paid for by workers union fees totalling more than \$570 per worker per year. The workers who

belong to Thompson's former union are the people mopping our hospital floors, emptying bedpans, laundering hospital bedding, showering residents in our nursing homes, and looking after the sick and the old.

These are the workers who the head of the ACTU claims will be "irreparably damaged" by the accountability measures contained in the Ensuring Integrity Bill.

Put simply, the long overdue Ensuring Integrity Bill will ensure that our courts can disqualify officials of registered organisations if they are judged by the Federal Court to not be a fit and proper person to hold office.

In making this decision, the Federal Court would finally be able to consider the type of dishonest, snout-in-the-trough behaviour from officials which has long gone unchecked.

This Bill in no way stops the hard-working members of unions like the NUW, TWU or HSU from having union representation. The Bill gives workers the opportunity to call out unacceptable behaviour and have it dealt with by the courts.

I predict that over the next few weeks the corridors of parliament will fill up with a stream of union officials trying to convince crossbench Senators that these reforms, which seek to apply proper standards of transparency and accountability, are instead simply targeted at Setka.

These reforms reflect the standards of conduct and behaviour our community already expects from companies and their directors, as set out in our Corporations Laws, and applies them to all unions and registered employer organisations.

These are standards which some in the union movement have had the courage to call for, too.

Former ACTU President Simon Crean, in the wake of reports of poor union conduct, called for some elements of the union movement to "get their house in order".

Former ACTU Vice-President, Paul Howes, has also made clear that he does "not have any issue with increasing the level of requirements and penalties on trade unions for breaching basic ethics like misappropriation of funds".

What some of today's union

bosses won't acknowledge is that the Ensuring Integrity Bill will help to restore integrity in all of our registered organisations, including unions.

Who knows, a higher standard of behaviour, more in line with what Australians expect, might even help to stop the continuing fall in union membership.

I wonder if Union bosses have stopped to think of that.

James Pearson is Chief Executive Officer, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

