WED 11 SEPTEMBER 2019

Daily Media Overview







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John Setka warns Labor he plans to appeal court decision to allow expulsion

Guardian Australia by Paul Karp

721 words • ASR AUD 20,037 • Families and Marriage - Internet • ID: 1170073161

10 Sep 2019 10:10 AM

Unionist's lawyers threaten injunction as MPs weigh Coalition's 'ensuring integrity' bill John Setka has warned Labor he intends to appeal a court decision allowing the national executive to expel him from the party, raising the stakes as parliamen...

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11 Sep 2019 The Australian, Australia



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Author: Ewin Hannan • Section: General News • Article type : News Item Classification : National • Audience : 94,448 • Page: 7 • Printed Size: 180.00cm² Region: National • Market: Australia • ASR: AUD 3,989 • Words: 473 Item ID: 1170336132

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Setka to appeal Supreme Court judgment

EWIN HANNAN WORKPLACE EDITOR

Victorian construction union leader John Setka will seek to appeal a Supreme Court decision rejecting his bid to stop him being expelled from the Labor Party.

Mr Setka had instructed his lawyers to apply to the Victorian Court of Appeal to seek leave to appeallast month's judgment.

The Australian understands Mr Setka's lawyers have written to the ALP asking the party not to make any further moves towards expelling him while the Court of Appeal process proceeds. If the undertaking is not received, Mr Setka will apply for an injunction preventing action by the ALP.

Supreme Court judge Peter Riordan said the ALP national executive did not have an unlimited right to expel members and its expulsion powers were subject to compliance with preconditions set out in rule 20 of the Victorian branch rules.

Rule 20 states the branch's disputes tribunal can expel a member for offences including branchstacking, disloyalty to the party, publicly attacking the party or failure to comply with the national constitution, party platform, a state conference decision or a resolution of the state administrative committee.

Justice Riordan said the intention of the party's rules was that an expulsion should be carried out by state branches, but he said Mr Setka's lawyers had conceded the national executive "may stand in the shoes" of the disputes tribunal and determine the expulsion. Anthony Albanese has vowed to pursue the removal of Mr Setka from the ALP, saying his conduct was bringing the Labor Party into disrepute and he must be expelled to end the reputational damage being done. Mr Setka and the ALP declined to comment on Tuesday.

Former ALP leader Bill Shorten backed Mr Albanese's stand saying Mr Setka should not remain in the Labor Party.

But he told the ABC the Coalition's Ensuring Integrity Bill, if passed, would not force Mr Setka out of the CFMEU because proposed laws were not retrospective.

The bill was criticised by the Uniting Church which said the laws would allow unions to be harassed through the courts by hostile employers and union rivals.

The Uniting Church Synod in Victoria and Tasmania said passage of the Coalition's Ensuring Integrity Bill would impose "excessive restrictions" on workers as well as unions seeking to conduct "lawful activities free from litigious harassment by hostile third parties". The bill allows any person with a "sufficient interest" to apply to the Federal Court for orders to disqualify an officer or deregister a union.

The Coalition said employers would potentially be able to apply to the Federal Court to get a union official disqualified

The synod told a Senate inquiry that it was appropriate to have laws requiring unions to act ethically and with integrity. But it said the bill appeared to create provisions where anti-union employers would be able to harass unions with applications for disqualification and deregistration.



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Author: Greg Brown • Section: General News • Article type : News Item Classification : National • Audience : 94,448 • Page: 6 • Printed Size: 124.00cm² Region: National • Market: Australia • ASR: AUD 2,748 • Words: 313 Item ID: 1170336026

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Libs 'lack commitment to integrity'

GREG BROWN

Opposition legal affairs spokesman Mark Dreyfus on Wednesday will urge Scott Morrison to fast-track plans for a national corruption body and accuse the government of showing a "lack of commitment to integrity".

In a speech to the National Press Club, Mr Dreyfus will lash the government for failing to introduce legislation for a national integrity commission, despite announcing support for the body eight months ago. His speech will attempt to distance federal Labor from the NSW party's woes in the hearings at the Independent Commission Against Corruption. "More than 20 months after Labor's announcement we would establish a national integrity commission, and more than eight months after the Liberal government announced the same commitment, we still don't have so much as an exposure draft for legislation to establish such a body,"Mr Dreyfus will say.

"Legislation to establish such a body is not even on the government's published legislative plan for the rest of this year. And this despite the fact at the time of the December press conference, the government claimed to have been working on legislation since January 2018. You have to ask just how serious this government is about a national integrity commission when 10 months after announcing the need for one and putting out a discussion paper, there is no proposal before parliament, and no sign it's even on the government's agenda for the rest of this year. We have a government obsessed with a bill about unions called ensuring integrity, that adamantly refuses to ensure its own integrity can be put under scrutiny."

On Monday, a Greens-backed bill to establish a national corruption body passed the Senate with the support of Labor.

A vote to bring on the bill in the House of Representatives failed on Tuesday, opposed by the government which has proposed a body with a smaller scope than the one backed by the Greens.