



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS
Mr Michael Pettersson MLA (Chair), Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert MLA (Deputy Chair)
Mr Chris Steel MLA, Mr Andrew Wall MLA

Mr Shane Rattenbury
Chair
Select Committee on Privileges 2018
Legislative Assembly for the ACT
Civic Square, London Circuit
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Mr Rattenbury

Privilege matter – Request for details

Thank you for your letter, dated 22 May 2018, regarding the actions of third-party websites in generating submission to parliamentary inquiries.

Please find below the information you were seeking.

- 1) How many submissions from the public or community bodies were received (a) via the UnionsACT website and (b) through other means?

	Number	Published	Not published	Rejected as non-conforming
Submissions received via the Unions ACT Website	30	11	14	5
Submissions received via other means (mostly direct email)	28	28		

- 2) How many submissions referred to in each category above could be described as being (a) favourable or (b) unfavourable to the issue of insecure work?

Submissions received via the UnionsACT website were mostly indeterminate on whether the author considered insecure work as being favourable or unfavourable on the whole. The majority of submissions from the site were individual accounts of employee experiences, with many expressing concern about one or more aspects of their current or previous employment arrangements, many of which were non-ongoing.

- 3) What actions did the EEYA Committee take with the submissions it received via the UnionsACT website?

Upon receipt the Committee was advised by the Secretary that the submissions did not comply with the Assembly's requirements as they did not include the submitter's address and telephone number. The Committee requested the Secretary to contact each of these submitters and request their address and telephone number to make the submissions compliant

The Secretary also advised that a number of the submissions contained adverse mention of specific companies and, per the Standing Orders, publication of the submissions would require the Committee to provide a right of reply to those companies. The Committee discussed the potential impact this might have on submitters and its concerns that, by using the UnionsACT tool, individuals may not have been provided with the same information about the submission process that they would receive on the Committee's website. The Committee requested the Secretary to explain the procedures related to adverse mention to relevant submitters and provide them with options for resubmitting or redacting certain parts of their submission if desired.

The Committee requested the Secretary to draft a letter for the Chair's signature requesting details and screenshots of the tool provided by UnionsACT, to provide the Committee with contextual information about the questions individuals were responding to when they made their submissions.

UnionsACT provided a link to the tool and the Secretary created screenshots for the Committee (Attachment A). The Committee considered the screen-shots of the UnionsACT website to determine what information had been provided to respondents about how their information would be used. The Committee noted that the instructions provided to potential submitters appeared to provide adequate information on what the survey was for and how the information provided could be used by the Committee.

The Committee did not confirm with UnionsACT whether all submissions received by UnionsACT were forwarded on to the Committee.

- 4) Did the receipt of submission via the Unions ACT website add to, or hinder, the Committee's inquiry? (5) Is your Committee able to comment on the utility of receiving submissions from third party websites?

The Committee considers that the UnionsACT website survey tool added to the inquiry in that it further promoted the work of the Assembly to a wider audience.

The quality and substance of the majority of submissions received through this method were lacking in quality and substance. The Committee notes that these submissions did not really contribute substantially to evidence and many were not directly relevant to the Terms of Reference. The Committee is also concerned that the respondents may not have been aware of the Terms of Reference. Below are links to some submissions received by the Committee via the UnionsACT website which were authorised for publication, as examples of the nature of the submissions received.

https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1089259/Submission-29-Robert-Easterbrook.pdf

https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1089255/Submission-26-Tracey-Yurtbilir.pdf

https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1089250/Submission-25-Beck-Edwards.pdf

The Committee did identify some potential witnesses from the submissions in order to hear individual accounts from employees in non-ongoing employment.

The Committee notes that the nature of the surveys received from the UnionsACT website created significant administrative work as the Committee could not be sure the authors were aware of how their submission may be used (or that it was a submission at all).

Many of the authors did not provide correct contact details so could not be contacted regarding potentially adverse commentary and possible redactions. As such, those submissions, where the author's bona-fides could not be established, were rejected or not authorised for publication.

The Committee understands that, when contacted by the Committee Secretary, a number of authors were unaware that their response was going to be a submission to the Committee and others withdrew their submission for fear of repercussions if submissions were published.

Other comments

The EEYA Committee would support a guideline for third-parties creating a survey website in the future.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MP', written over a faint, illegible stamp.

Michael Pettersson MLA
Chair

29 May 2018



Have you experienced casualisation or exploitation at work?

The ACT Assembly is conducting an inquiry into the impact of insecure, casualised work.

We want to ensure that the politicians hear real stories about what work is really like.

Share your story

Below is a form where we are going to prompt you with a series of questions that the inquiry into insecure work is looking to have answered. Please be as descriptive as possible.

You will have the option to keep your story anonymous, or send it directly to the Committee.

What kind of casualised work do you want to tell us about? *

Select	▼
Select	
informally employed	
employed through a labour hire agency	
contracted on ABN but to one employer only	
directly employed as a casual	
on a rolling short-term contract	
on a group training apprentice scheme	

Pay and conditions

Were you paid fairly and correctly for the hours you worked? *

Yes

No

Do you believe your employer was complying with the law regarding your employment? *

- Yes
- No

Did you feel that you could discuss your pay and conditions without risking your job? *

- Yes
- No

Please explain the problems you had with your pay and conditions...

I experienced

Try to be as descriptive as possible. There is no word limit.

Health and Safety

Was your work always safe? *

- Yes
- No

Were you told about WorkCover and what to do if you were injured? *

- Yes
- No

Did you feel you could discuss health and safety without risking your job? *

- No

Please explain the problems you had with your health and safety...

I experienced

Try to be as descriptive as possible. There is no word limit.

Personal Impact

Did you have a predictable roster that you could plan your life around? *

- Yes
- No

Could you or your co-workers organise childcare to suit your work schedule? *

- Yes
- No

Could you take leave when you needed without worrying about losing your job? *

- Yes
- No

Please explain the personal problems you had because of insecure work...

I experienced

Try to be as descriptive as possible. There is no word limit.

Financial Security

Could you pay your bills and buy food each week? *

- Yes
 No

Could you pay your rent/mortgage when it was due? *

- Yes
 No

Did you feel confident about the future of your job and income? *

- Yes
 No

Please explain the financial stresses, worries and anxieties you faced...

I experienced

Try to be as descriptive as possible. There is no word limit.

Solution

If you could improve things, and you were the ACT Government, what would you do?

If I were the Government, I would

Your details

You can provide this information anonymously. We need to collect your basic information but will not share it with the ACT Assembly unless you give your permission.

Name *

First

Last

Gender

Your mobile number

Email *

Enter Email

Confirm Email

We need this information to verify your submission.

Your Suburb *

Your Postcode *

Would you be prepared to consider coming to a public hearing and talking about your experience? *

- Yes
 No

Are you currently a union member? *

- Yes
- No

You don't need to be a union member to make a submission.

Union

Optional

Can you tell us about your employer? *

- Yes
- No, prefer not to say

Which company was your employer, or host-employer (i.e. what company/site did you work on)?

Which agency or individual was paying you? (who was paying you?)

What was the town/suburb where you were working?

What industry were you working in?

Finally

Do you wish your story to remain anonymous? *

- Yes
- No

[Click here to read the UnionsACT privacy policy.](#)

Submission

I accept the privacy, terms and conditions. Information contained in my submission may be used by UnionsACT as part of its ongoing work to advance workers' rights.

- I agree

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT'S THIS INQUIRY ALL ABOUT?

The ACT Assembly is holding a formal inquiry into the impacts and extent of insecure work.

In simple terms, the government wants to know how widespread casualisation is in the ACT, and what it really means to everyday people.


A whole range of casualised and contracted-out work will be looked at by the committee, including labour hire, group training apprentice schemes, temporary working visas, and contracting.

The ACT Assembly wants to hear stories from everyday people in Canberra about how casualisation has affected your life. This can include being mistreated, being made to work in unsafe conditions, or having financial stress or relationship problems as a result of casualisation.

You can find out more about the inquiry at their website.

SHARE YOUR STORY

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT'S THIS INQUIRY ALL ABOUT? 

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE INFORMATION I SHARE ON THIS PAGE? 

UnionsACT is providing this inquiry submission tool to allow everyday people to make a formal submission to the inquiry.

If you choose to, the information provided by you will be shared with the Inquiry. You can choose to make an anonymous submission, but it has more impact if you use your name.

All of the information you share will be recorded by UnionsACT, and we may use it in our submission to the inquiry. If you asked to remain anonymous, we won't identify you. Additionally, we may share your information with your union, if you are a member.


Read our [privacy policy](#) here.

WHAT ARE UNIONS DOING ABOUT INSECURE WORK AND CASUALISATION? 

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED WITH MY UNION? 

UNIONSACT



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