

3 APRIL 2019

WORKPLACE LAWS NEED TO CHANGE

Staff and Deputies have faced the brunt of bad workplace laws over recent years. Last year the Fair Work laws meant that coal companies won their case to slash Award Accident Pay by half a year to 52 weeks. The year before, the Fair Work laws let coal companies slash the Award redundancy pay, capping the severance amount at 15 years or 30 weeks. One by one, the coal companies are gutting your Award conditions, and the laws are letting them.

When Staff and Deputies have tried to secure their conditions in an enterprise agreement, and their employer breached good faith bargaining laws, Fair Work didn't have the power to arbitrate an outcome.

When OCE's and Supervisors started bargaining, their employer said they would only offer them the Award wage – effectively cutting their wages by half.

When Yancoal moved Staff and Deputies to a shelf company and cut conditions, the Fair Work laws allowed it.

When South32 locked out their own Deputies for 2 weeks, once again, the Fair Work laws allowed it.

In all of these cases by members working collectively we were able to reduce the impacts of these bad laws, but what we really need is fair laws that restore balance. But it does seem that the laws are stacked in the employers' favor – the pendulum has swung too far. We now have an opportunity to restore balance.

Your union supports the Change the Rules campaign. We plan to explain more to members in upcoming weeks about how we need to get the workplace laws changed to be able to support you and your co-workers to maintain a fair Award safety net, have the laws support you in enterprise bargaining, have the laws support you from being moved to a shelf company, and restore arbitration so your arguments can be heard by an independent umpire.

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