

Proposed Commonwealth Inquiry Into State Public Sector Industrial Relations

The federal member for Melbourne, Adam Bandt (Greens Party) has introduced a motion into federal parliament seeking to establish an urgent inquiry into how best to protect state government public sector workers from attacks on their working conditions by state governments.

Members will recall my previous advice about this year's changes to Queensland Industrial laws, including a diluting of bargaining rights, a diluting of the industrial commission's independence, and the removal of employment security laws and existing certified agreement provisions.

Mr Bandt's motion seeks to direct the Federal Standing Committee on Education and Employment to inquire into and report on the adequacy of state government employees' rights at work and what legislative and regulatory options are available to the Commonwealth government to ensure that state public sector workers have equal protections of their rights at work.

Obviously, Mr Bandt's motion will require a majority support of other federal parliamentarians, if it is to be adopted by the parliament and put into action.

Last week, I took the step of writing to each and every federal MP, including independents and from all parties, asking them to support Mr Bandt's motion for an Inquiry, as follows:

"I refer to the Federal Member for Melbourne's motion for the Standing Committee on Education and Employment to inquire into state public sector industrial relations.

The United Firefighters' Union, Queensland Branch has always had a robust and constructive industrial relationship with state governments of various political persuasions over the years.

Recently, we have cause for concern about a series of changes to Queensland State Industrial Laws, which could impact on constructive industrial relations and moreover, reduce fair protections for dedicated fire and rescue staff.

As you would be aware, firefighters nowadays attend to every kind of emergency including fires, floods, earthquakes, chemical spills and road accidents.

I believe it is in the public interest for the Commonwealth parliament to examine these matters and consider what options there are to provide adequate protection for our rights at work.

I ask that you support Mr Bandt's motion."

I will advise members as to progress of this matter.

John Oliver
State Secretary