

Media Release

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Mornington Inn Prosecutions. The government gets \$170000 but Tasmanian Workers get more of Workchoices

Unions Tasmania today welcomed the prosecution and fining of the Mornington Inn for applying duress to staff to sign AWA/Individual contracts. However Secretary, Simon Cocker described the process as overly legalistic and not a just outcome for workers. The \$170 000 in fines does not go to the workers as compensation for the anguish caused by the disruption to their lives and, in some cases, loss of their jobs. The money goes to the Federal Government.

Commenting on the outcome of the prosecution Unions Tasmania Secretary Simon Cocker said:

This case shows the worst of what can happen under John Howard's unfair workplace laws. Workers placed under duress, some of them dismissed and all because the Federal government gave a green light to employers to behave badly with its Workchoices legislation.

Because of AWAs these workers lost the right to collectively bargain and were peeled off one by one and placed under duress to sign an unfair individual contract.

The workers who did not leave the Mornington Inn get a pitiful amount of back pay and the Federal Government gets \$170,000. Where's the fairness in that?

We have already seen this week with the behaviour of Video City management in Burnie and Devonport that the Workchoices legislation was seen by some employers as a green light to behave badly.

Fining employers hundreds of thousands of dollars will never compensate Tasmanian workers for the loss of their basic rights to collectively bargain and to seek help from their union and it will never put back a strong safety net for low paid workers in this state.

This decision doesn't prove that the Howard Government's IR system works. All it proves is that one employer was foolish enough to get caught.

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