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## Workplace delegates need rights & protections to undertake their vital role IEU Reps to share their stories with Senate Committee

**IEU delegates will be appearing before today's Senate inquiry into the *Fair Work Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill* to share their experiences as workplace representatives and the vital role played by delegates in our industrial relations system.**

Delegates are at the centre of fair and efficient workplaces; collective bargaining would fall apart without them. These unpaid, volunteer roles need and deserve [basic rights and protections](#).

Long-serving IEU delegates Abbey, a Secondary Catholic School Teacher, and Eugene a Catholic School Teacher-Coordinator, are appearing at the inquiry to speak the simple truth of how their roles underpin cooperative workplaces and what delegates need to effectively support their workmates.

Abbey and Eugene are part of a 2000 strong nation-wide network of IEU delegates made up of teachers, learning aides, librarians, lab techs, early childhood professionals, school leaders and services staff. Members volunteer for these unpaid roles on behalf of colleagues and their workplace.

Workplace laws have changed dramatically in recent years with the continued decentralisation of much of the system to the enterprise level; however, the rights and protections for delegates [haven't kept pace with these changes](#).

While the IEU has negotiated delegates' rights in many schools, such rights aren't universal and the majority of Australian workplaces are still denied such opportunities. This is why we need the [Closing Loopholes Bill](#) to guarantee the rights of delegates to undertake their role, access union training and have the opportunity to liaise with employees and management to help solve local problems.

The system would grind to a halt if it wasn't for delegates working alongside staff and management:

- helping negotiate and implement collective agreements to get wages moving and improve workplace efficiencies;
- consulting on proposed changes and how they will impact staff and work operations - listening to workers leads to better decision making, staff wellbeing and job satisfaction;
- identifying and talking with management where there are cases of incorrect pay or workplace problems so they can be resolved at the local level to avoid costly legal disputes; and
- participating in consultative committees and other management-employee forums to foster open communication and shared strategies to challenges such as staffing or workload.

We expect so much of workplace delegates, all they ask in return are modest changes to help them make workplaces fairer and prevent the exploitation of employees.