Gillard union laws must be rewritten (Letter published in AFR, 5 Jan 2016. Deletions by Ed shown with brackets {})

The royal commission report into trade unions by Dyson Heydon provides support for legislative change on workplace relations ("Malcolm Turnbull government prepared to stake election on passage of union laws", Jan 31). In fact, the Heydon report identifies dozens of instances of action by unions or unionists that establish a prima facie case for prosecution and also involve business officials in some cases.

{Yet Opposition Leader Shorten and the ACTU refuse to address the problems uncovered in any substantive way.}

Australia's workplace relations problems {run far wider than dealing with such cases. They} derive from the collective bargaining arrangements established under the Gillard government. These arrangements have provided unions with a quasi-monopoly position that allows them {and those directly involved in the bargaining of deals} to garner benefits to the disadvantage of others and the wider community. {In short, the regulatory system itself creates a situation which allows exploitation and the kind of offences identified in Heydon}.

Any solution must go much further than improving legislation on governance and the building industry. {The Gillard legislation must be fundamentally revised and} individuals allowed to negotiate free of union involvement.

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