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Is multi-employer bargaining being used by the ETU in NSW and the ACT to limit employers' ability to bargain directly with their employees?

- I am aware that the Electrical Trades Union has lodged an application for a single interest employer authorisation to cover a number of electrical companies in New South Wales and the ACT.
- I am also aware that a number of the employers have also applied for a separate single interest bargaining authorisation.
- Multi-employer bargaining carefully balances the interests of employees and employers.
- Single enterprise bargaining remains the primary focus of the Fair Work Act's agreement making framework.

- The government stands by the reforms we have made to reinvigorate bargaining and lift workers' wages.
- As these matters are before the Fair Work Commission it would not be appropriate for me to make any further comment.

s 22(1)

Contact Officer: David Cains, Assistant Secretary **Telephone**: s 47F(1) or s 47F(1)

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Single-Interest Employer Bargaining

s 22(1)

Electrical Trades Union (ETU) - NSW and ACT Agreement

- On 4 December 2025, the AFR reported claims that the ETU is making a single interest authorisation application to cover a number of major electrician employers in NSW and the ACT. The article also states that the ETU is seeking to extend coverage to non-unionised second-tier companies and regional contractors.
- On 3 December 2025, the National Electrical and Communications Association (NECA) announced that it opposes this application.
- On 5 December 2025, Mr Kent Johns, Head of Government Relations and Policy of NECA, wrote to you to raise their concerns.
- On 28 January 2026, the AFR reported that a group of electrical contractors in NSW were launching a separate application for a single interest authorisation in an attempt to prevent being roped in by the ETU's application.
- The AFR's report also included that NECA was expected to challenge the ETU's application on the basis that the exclusion of general building and construction industry extends to work in the electrical contracting industry.
- On 20 February 2026, NECA told its members that the Fair Work Commission was considering next steps following a conciliation hearing in which the employers' proposal to limit the scope of the agreement to projects over $125 million in the County of Cumberland or the County of Cumberland and regional NSW was rejected.
- On 24 March 2026, the Full Bench of the Fair Work Commission dismissed an application by the employers to stay the ETU's application until after the Fair Work Commission has heard the employer-led application.

- In its decision, the Full Bench also sought submissions on a joinder application by the ETU to combine the determination of the 2 applications and indicated that it would determine the matter on the papers.

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