May 15, 2019

**Researchers welcome Labor’s wage theft crackdown**

The authors of the ground breaking study on wage theft have welcomed the Federal Opposition’s policy announcement to give underpaid workers an ‘efficient and effective avenue to reclaim unpaid wages’.

Labor has announced today that it will create a new small claims jurisdiction with funding for legal assistance for workers to file wage claims.

Senior law lecturer at UNSW Law, Bassina Farbenblum, and senior law lecturer at UTS Law, Dr Laurie Berg, released the [Wage Theft in Silence](https://www.mwji.org/highlights/wage-theft-in-silence) report late last year.

Dr Laurie Berg says their research found that more than half of temporary migrants surveyed were underpaid, but only a small minority were able to reclaim the wages owed to them.

“Our study on wage theft among almost 4,500 temporary migrant workers showed that underpaid migrant workers don’t get their money back and the system is broken,” Dr Berg says.

Ms Farbenblum says there’s an entrenched cycle of impunity for wage theft.

“There’s no way to break this cycle unless workers have a quick, cheap and accessible avenue to reclaim the wages they are owed, and can hold employers to account,” she says.

The researchers encourage all sides of politics to propose similar measures to the Labor announcement, to assist underpaid workers.

**-ENDS-**

**Contact:** Bassina Farbenblum on 0412 105 177**,** Dr Laurie Berg on 0433 525 745.