

THE LAW

FAILSAFE: Support for workers caught out by corporate collapses



years in a company, you get nothing more,” Mr Shorten said. “What the opposition will be doing with their amendments is enshrining a short-term view of people’s loyalty, saying that, at four years, that’s it.

“If you have worked as a machinist in an automotive components company for 20 years,

they are saying, ‘You might as well have only worked there for four years, because that is all we are giving you’.”

“We do need a safety net”

The opposition amendments were defeated and the bill passed the House and the Senate with the support of crossbench MPs. •



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STATUTE LAW

Legal spring clean

Tidy up for legislation.

Australia’s laws were recently scheduled for spring cleaning, with the passage of a bill to fix typos, punctuation errors and cross-referencing mistakes in about 150 pieces of Commonwealth legislation.

Obsolete laws such as the Treaty of Peace (Germany) Act 1919 will also be scrapped in a bid to tidy up the law book.

Attorney-General Nicola Roxon introduced the clean-up bill into the House of Representatives, stating that the aim of the Statute Law Revision Bill 2012 was to make the Commonwealth statute book simpler, clearer and easier to understand.

“Statute law revision bills have been used for the last 30 years to improve the quality of Commonwealth legislation,” she said.

“The bills do not make substantive changes to the law but still perform the important function of repairing minor errors ... which accumulated across successive government amendments.”

The Office of Parliamentary Counsel had the job of going through the acts, finding the errors and out-dated references to be fixed.

Proposed amendments include:

- inserting or deleting full stops and capital letters;
- replacing terms that no longer exist with the ones that replaced them;
- fixing incorrect cross-references;
- fixing incorrect punctuation;
- fixing typographical/spelling errors such as himself→himself; originally→originally;
- getting rid of redundant sections of acts;
- adding conjunctions at the end of the subparagraphs to make the acts consistent with current drafting practice;
- replacing specific references and definitions of certain aircraft with more generic references;
- removing specific references to ministers and departments with generic terms that will still be relevant even if the portfolio name changes; and
- repealing obsolete acts entirely. •