

## Transcript



Title: Work in the data economy - what action is needed now to ensure good work for all? (Society 4.0 Forum)

Author(s): Andrew Dettmer (Australian Manufacturing Workers Union); Social Innovation Research Institute

Year: 2018

Audio/video for this transcript available from: <http://commons.swinburne.edu.au>

Andrew Dettmer discussed Australia's decline in union membership, and how unions work for the aspirations of workers. As we move toward Industry 4.0 he spoke about those medium level jobs requiring minimal cognitive input will be negatively impacted, and the more complex jobs will be enhanced.

Andrew introduced the findings from AMWU research for the very first time to the Society 4.0 Forum. Their survey found that:

- Workers are being trusted to act with autonomy, however they are constricted to very limited parameters;
- Workers would like to play a bigger role in their organisations;
- Workers are not being given a say, or consulted as to how technology could be best used in their workplaces;
- Workers believe productivity will be improved with an employee consultative committee focused on genuine business decisions.

Andrew discussed how this broken system, that continues to be defended, needs to change if business is to engage with their workers.

I could read out more, but I think you get the drift. For the AMWU and most other manufacturing unions, the conclusion is obvious. The system is broken, yet it continues to be defended and Union proposals for change are 'poo-pooed'.

Our friends at the Australian Industry Group continue to support the broken enterprise bargaining system which has led us to this.

Another field which has suffered grievously from this zealotry, and I refer to the parlour state of a game that I love which possibly puts many of you to sleep, and after all now you have to have cable television to watch it, and that is cricket. And I was labouring in the air, I had plenty of time to read this well-known union oh sorry it's not a union rag but the Australian which is well known for its left wing thought. And somehow this snuck in. Written by Gideon Haigh but an excerpt from the Ethics Centre's Simon Longstaff in his report on Cricket Australia. Where he says "They are blinded by their noble intentions. They are desensitised by the logic of their arguments and the science that informs their principles. They believe that they are the clear eyed realists and that others are deluded. They just cannot see the unintended effects of which they are ultimately responsible.

Ladies and gentlemen, we say in the trade union movement, the failings that Simon Longstaff has pointed out in Cricket Australia are likewise the failings in Australia's industrial relations system.

So is business is to engage with their "most important asset", then the solution to us is obvious. That we have to change the rules.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]