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INTERNATIONAL CLEANERS' DAY REPORT FINDS CLEANING IN CRISIS

A research report being released today, International Cleaners' Day, finds the state of the retail cleaning industry is in a state of crisis— a danger to the public and cleaners alike.

The report, compiled by United Voice, the cleaners' union, features independent research by academics, government bodies and includes surveys of cleaners. The report finds that, due to the unsustainable business model of contract cleaning, the industry is in a state of crisis that threatens shoppers, business owners, investors and even the cleaners themselves.

"As a cleaner in South Australia, I work hard to ensure to make sure my centre is clean. No one wants to go into a bathroom to find it covered in dirt and faeces," Cathy Daniels said. "But, I've seen staff numbers go down, so I'm literally running around all day, trying to get things done."

The report reveals that cleaning companies are awarded contracts by submitting bids to owners, often with the lowest bidder winning the contract. This system means some companies must cut corners, including cutting staff and not providing cleaners with enough equipment. The report shows that some cleaners were forced to use the same mops for toilets and other areas and even had to cut sponges in half to save on supplies.

"Cleaners are the lynchpins of shopping centres in our communities," National Secretary of United Voice, Louise Tarrant said. "It's because of their hard work that customers come back, collectively spending millions of dollars every year."

"But, because of the crisis in the cleaning industry, including heavy workloads and poverty level wages, cleaners aren't able to do the work to the best of their abilities—it's unfair to the public at large."

Cleaners in retail shopping centres are currently working with industry leaders to improve the cleaning industry. Although many cleaning companies have showed their dedication to improving standards in cleaning by meeting and talking with cleaners, large and publicly listed cleaning company, Spotless, is undermining those efforts.

"Spotless is blocking any industry reform by refusing to talk with their workforce," Ms Tarrant said.

To raise awareness of the crisis in cleaning, events and rallies will be held in every major city today, International Cleaners' Day. This includes the awarding of the annual Golden Toilet Brush Award to the client or contractor who has shown the most disregard for shoppers and cleaners alike.

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