



Australian Council of Trade Unions

MEDIA RELEASE

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Liberal plan to cut industry support would cost hundreds of thousands of jobs

A Coalition proposal to cut industry support to manufacturing would put the jobs of hundreds of thousands of hard-working Australians at risk and undermine the domestic economy, say unions.

ACTU President Sharan Burrow said it was telling that Shadow Treasurer Joe Hockey had let slip a “scorched earth” approach to industry support that would lead to the closure of hundreds of businesses.

In a radio interview, Mr Hockey has flagged a Coalition policy to slash subsidies to vulnerable but important industries such as car making and textiles, clothing and footwear.

A senior frontbench colleague, Ian MacFarlane, added to the confusion today by disagreeing with the Shadow Treasurer.

Ms Burrow said the Liberals had caused anxiety and uncertainty for industries which directly or indirectly employed more than a million people, generated export dollars, and played a crucial role in diversifying Australia’s economy.

“Once again, Joe Hockey has shown that he cares little about the jobs of working Australians,” Ms Burrow said.

“His campaign against the economic stimulus program would have resulted in jobless ranks swelling over the past year.

“Now, he would expose the manufacturing sector and the jobs it provides to uncertainty and fear.

“Australian manufacturing is world-class and employs 9.3% of all jobs in Australia.

“Manufacturing is a key strategic industry which contributes billions of dollars to exports, tax revenues and the economy, employs hundreds of thousands of people, and contributes to skills and technology development.

“Without manufacturing, Australia would be even more dependent on the boom-bust resources and agriculture sectors.

“Industry assistance is provided for reform and restructure, and is backed by unions and business groups alike.

“If they are serious about removing industry support, then hundreds of thousands of workers would like to know just what is Joe Hockey and Tony Abbott’s plan for the future of Australian manufacturing.”

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