

Embargoed to 6am: Thursday, 22 July 2010

Liberals can do much more than 'tweak' Fair Work laws and can't be trusted

Community volunteers will take to the streets of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane this morning in a blitz to inform morning commuters of the almost 200 ways in which Tony Abbott could change Fair Work laws and allow aspects of WorkChoices to be slipped in through the back door.

Volunteers will hand out leaflets to morning commuters at major railway stations as part of a campaign to inform the public about the Coalition's industrial relations plans. Stations to be targeted are Martin Place in Sydney, Flinders Street in Melbourne, and Roma Street in Brisbane.

None of these would involve legislation, and they make a mockery of Mr Abbott's claim that WorkChoices is "dead, buried and cremated", says the ACTU.

ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence said an analysis of the Fair Work laws had uncovered 198 separate sections which would allow the Government to make changes impacting on working Australians without the approval of Parliament.

"Tony Abbott simply can't be trusted not to make substantial changes to workplace rights," Mr Lawrence said. "You just have to look at his track record. WorkChoices is in his DNA.

"At the stroke of a pen, Tony Abbott could reduce unfair dismissal protections for small business employees, reduce minimum conditions in modern awards or enterprise agreements, and cut their entitlements to redundancy payments.

"With 198 possible changes to the Fair Work laws that can be made through regulations, you have to wonder just how much 'tweaking' Tony Abbott and the Liberals intend to do.

"We are only a couple of days into the election campaign, and Tony Abbott has already broken his promise that he would not be making any legislative changes to laws governing workplaces.

"His proposal to cut funding for Australian Electoral Commission oversight of union elections would require rewriting to the Fair Work laws and seriously curtail democracy in the workplace. This shows again that Mr Abbott's campaign promises change like the wind, and he cannot be trusted."

MEDIA CONFERENCE

ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence will be available for comment on the risks posed to working people by the election of Tony Abbott and the Liberal Party.

9.15am

Thursday, 22 July 2010

Under the Clocks, Flinders Street Station, Melbourne

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