

Embargoed to 5am, Tuesday, 17 August 2010

More than half-a-million Queensland workers could be hit hard by Liberals' workplace plans: unions

Unions are conducting an urgent series of workplace meetings across the State this week to remind Queenslanders about the risk of a return to WorkChoices and job cuts under the Coalition.

Both ACTU President Ged Kearney and ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence are focussing the last week of the election campaign on workplace meetings in Brisbane and regional Queensland.

Unions believe more than 500,000 Queensland workers could be affected by Liberal plans to strip unfair dismissal protections, reintroduce individual contracts and cut jobs.

Low-paid workers in retail and hospitality, Commonwealth public servants and mine workers would be most at risk from workplace changes if the Coalition is elected says the ACTU.

At workplace meetings this week, unions are reminding Queenslanders of the Labor Government's achievements in protecting jobs during the Global Financial Crisis and getting rid of WorkChoices. They are also telling workers that only a Labor Government can deliver higher superannuation, guarantee employee entitlements and prevent a return to WorkChoices.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said the fact is 41,000 Queenslanders owe the Labor Government for their job.

"That is how many people in this State would have been made redundant if the Coalition had succeeded in stopping the stimulus," Ms Kearney said.

"We will also be explaining to Queensland workers how Tony Abbott is trying to hide his real intentions to bring back the worst aspects of WorkChoices.

"All this year the Liberals have been wooing business with promises to give employers more power by winding back workers' protections from unfair dismissal, reintroduce individual contracts and reduce minimum standards in awards.

"Tony Abbott has never said these things are off the agenda and big business is already gearing up to push for these changes after the election.

"Queensland workers face cuts to their pay and conditions and reduced job security if the Coalition gives employers the power they want," said Ms Kearney

MEDIA ALERT - Tuesday, 17 August 2010

8.30am: ACTU President Ged Kearney visits Micah Projects, not-for-profit organisation. Shop 6/7, 162 Boundary Street, West End.

1pm: ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence addresses stopwork rally at University of Queensland. Michie Auditorium, Chancellor Place, St Lucia.

Ms Kearney and Mr Lawrence are both available for interview.

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