

Friday, 20 August 2010

ACTU chiefs search far and wide for missing Liberal IR spokesman and his policy

The President and Secretary of the ACTU have clocked up thousands of kilometres scouring the country for the missing Liberal industrial relations spokesman Eric Abetz, and have now issued a reward to anyone who finds him before polling day.

The ACTU has left no stone unturned in the futile search for Senator Abetz, who was last seen on 17 July shooting holes into Tony Abbott's declaration that WorkChoices was "dead, buried, and cremated".

ACTU President Ged Kearney said she and Secretary Jeff Lawrence had been concerned about the Tasmanian Senator's welfare since his gaffe that "of course, the laws may be tweaked".

So concerned was the ACTU, that Mr Lawrence personally ventured to Tasmania earlier this month to lead a fruitless search for Senator Abetz.

"The Liberals' IR policy has gone missing, and so has their IR spokesman," Ms Kearney said.

"With just 24 hours to go before Australians vote, we have yet to see any detail of how Tony Abbott will deliver on his pledge to reduce protections from unfair dismissal and reintroduce individual contracts, let alone remove minimum standards in awards.

"Tony Abbott is attempting to deceive the Australian public, just as John Howard did before the 2004 election by not providing any clue about his plan to go back to WorkChoices.

"The ACTU has twice written to the Liberals and they have failed to guarantee they won't wind back rights at work.

"They have never said these things are off the agenda, and big business is already gearing up to push for these changes after 21 August.

"It's appalling that Australians will vote tomorrow without knowing the Liberals' plan for our workplaces.

"Mr Abbott must answer some basic questions about unfair dismissal, individual contracts, minimum employment standards and redundancy pay.

"But he must also answer this question: what have you done with Eric Abetz? We're worried about Eric. Has he been locked in a closet with his policy, not to be released until after the election?"

"The ACTU is prepared to offer a reward of a dozen pristine WorkChoices mouse pads to anyone who can provide conclusive proof of Senator Abetz's whereabouts."

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