ACTU australian council of trade unions

media release

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Telstra job cuts a betrayal of working people and customers

The peak body for working people has condemned the announcement of 8,000 sackings at Telstra, saying the company has betrayed its customers and staff.

The unilateral move by the company to make 8,000 people jobless and destabilise an entire workforce who now have to wonder about their job security as part of its restructure represents the one of the biggest corporate downsizes in Australia's history.

People working for and contracting to the company were not informed that Telstra was about to make them unemployed before this morning, when the company live-streamed an announcement to staff.

It is still unclear who will be sacked and when. People working at the company are understandably distressed and outraged at their employer's actions.

The CPSU has urged Communications Minister Mitch Fifield and Jobs Minister Michaelia Cash to take action by bringing Telstra management together with key stakeholders – including unions, consumers and community representatives – to work out an alternative.

The fact that such a large, iconic and profitable Australian company was able to embark on mass sackings to increase its bottom line at the expense of working people shows that the rules that govern our working lives must change.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

"Telstra has betrayed the people who work for them by making them jobless and the people who rely on their services with today's mass sackings announcement. They have made the wrong decision."

"They have chosen to make 8,000 people jobless, they have destabilised an entire workforce, they have chosen to deliver poorer service to their customers – they have chosen to put profits ahead of people, jobs and service."

"Unless this decision is reversed, the company will end up paying the price, as their reputation disintegrates, their service and coverage erode and their standing as an iconic Australian company is irrevocably damaged."

"Today's events show that the end point of the privatisation process is joblessness, reduced service quality and the enrichment of a small group of senior managers at the expense of working people and staff."

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