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Porter threatens job security for thousands

Social Services Minister Christian Porter has threatened the job security of all employees who work under government contracts in a shocking letter sent to workers at 1800-RESPECT.

The letter states that given 1800-RESPECT - a critical community services for women, children and men experiencing violence - was not guaranteed funding on a permanent basis by the federal government, they were "negligent" in offering job security to their workers.

Most government contracts for goods and services, including those in the community services sector operate under the assumption that fixed term contracts will be renewed on a rolling basis subject to review. This enables providers to give consistent and high quality services and ensure that front line staff have a measure of job security and stability. 1800-RESPECT was operating on a 7-year contract.

Mr Porter's staggering assertion would throw this assumption on its head, and undermine the job security of hundreds of thousands of front line community and social service workers who work for organisations which receive government funding on a fixed term contracts.

Immediately, this will affect child protection workers, rape/domestic violence counsellors, disability workers, drug and alcohol counsellors, people helping the disadvantaged find work, educators and trainers and public transport workers.

The federal government is the largest single consumer of goods and services in this country, and the change Mr Porter seems to be suggesting in funding arrangements between the government and Australian businesses would have far-reaching consequences for the whole economy and millions of workers.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President, Ged Kearney:

"What Mr Porter has said in this letter is a disgrace, and is alarming to all Australian workers."

"40% of jobs in Australia are insecure. The government should be working to increase permanent secure jobs, not the opposite."

"Mr Porter needs to immediately clarify his comments and make it clear whether he believes that all workers on government contracts should be in insecure work."

"This is the face of our broken industrial relations system. A government minister telling a service provider that they have made a mistake by creating permanent jobs for Australian workers. This government doesn't believe in good, steady jobs. In fact, it's actively trying to destroy them."

"We need to change the rules so that critical services like 1800-RESPECT don't get their funding cut to help the government pay for corporate tax cuts."

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