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Campbell Newman's IR power grab a major concern for Queensland workers

The Newman Government's attempt to seize industrial relations powers from the Federal Government and return almost 300,000 small business employees to the state IR system will leave Queensland workers worse off, the ACTU said today.

ACTU president Ged Kearney said the Newman Government has already shown its contempt for workers by moving to sack 14,000 public servants since it was elected.

"Shifting hundreds of thousands of workers back into the Queensland IR system will leave them vulnerable to losing pay and conditions such as penalty rates." Ms Kearney said.

"The National Retail Association is already calling for the Queensland Government to reduce penalty rates and casual loadings as part of this change.

"The Newman Government could then rip apart the state award system to suit employers. When it comes to workers' penalty rates, Queenslanders should not trust the Liberal National Party."

"It is clear that the only reason they would take the trouble to do this is if they have an agenda to extend their anti-worker policies to more Queenslanders."

"It is particularly concerning given that when Queensland Attorney-General Jarrod Bleijie first raised the idea three months ago, Premier Newman dismissed it, yet now it appears that it has been his government's plan all along."

Ms Kearney said that the Newman Government's close relationship with business groups made it likely that a new IR system would be used to cut workers' entitlements.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland is already on the record as opposing week-end penalty rates for all businesses, limiting overtime, and reintroducing individual contracts that take away pay and conditions.

"This is an astonishing proposal from the Newman Government, which shows how arrogant and out-of-touch it is with the workers of Queensland," Ms Kearney said.

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