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## Unions take action with jobs plan for Australia's future

More support for local jobs and industries through local content rules, a crackdown on dumping, and stronger enforcement of labour rights are essential to ensure Australians continue to have secure jobs with good pay and conditions well into the future, say unions

Unions will release an action plan at today's Future Jobs Forum, which will guide Government, industry and workers through the challenges faced by the economy now and in the future.

Ms Kearney said the plan should be adopted by Government beyond the jobs forum, which must focus on addressing the rise of insecure work and the shifting of financial risk from business to households over the past two decades.

"More than 40% of workers do not have permanent work and are either employed as casuals, contractors, fixed term or labour hire. They do not have all the same rights as the rest of the workforce and cannot plan for the future," Ms Kearney said.

"Insecure work, where millions of Australians have no certainty about their income, or even if they will have a job, from week to week, is building a fragile house of cards in the economy,"

"Given the strength of the Australian economy and decades of sustained economic growth, there is no justification for why the proportion of the workforce with insecure jobs is so high. Insecure workers have told us they want a job they can rely on. That is why unions' *Secure Jobs. Better Future* campaign will speak up for this large, often disenfranchised sector of the workforce and work towards change for the better."

Ms Kearney said the Unions' Action Plan for Jobs was a starting point towards solutions to meet challenges within the labour market. It includes a call for the Government to commission an audit and independent review, led by representatives from unions, employers and key Government departments, to identify jobs promotion opportunities.

"Australia's labour market is the envy of the developed world," Ms Kearney said. "Credit for this must lie with the Labor Government, which protected jobs in Australia through its strong actions to stimulate the economy during the Global Financial Crisis," Ms Kearney said.

"We need an industry plan to consider issues confronting the manufacturing sector in particular, which is under extraordinary pressure from the booming dollar and unfair competition from illegal foreign dumping."

Ms Kearney said unions were committed to lifting Australia's rate of productivity growth, but this would not be achieved by taking away workers' rights.

"Genuine productivity growth will occur through investment in skills, education and training, spending on infrastructure, and investment in technology and innovation," she said.

"The low road of taking away workplace rights and cutting pay and conditions was discredited by WorkChoices, during which productivity growth slowed even further. Employer groups who are gearing up for a new assault on workplace rights should not see the jobs forum as another soapbox for their campaign to take Australia back to WorkChoices.

"The commodities boom will not last forever, so to ensure we continue to reap its benefits for generations to come, we must put long-term sustainable job creation the centre of economic policy.

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