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## Foxtel is exploiting contractors and shirking fair work responsibilities, say unions

The workers who install home services for pay TV operator Foxtel should have secure jobs and fair pay and conditions in line with Australian workplace standards, say unions.

The ACTU is backing a new campaign for secure jobs for pay TV installers, which is launched by the Communications Electrical and Plumbing Union today.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said Foxtel was exploiting its pay TV installers, employing them as individual contractors through a labour hire company, which had recently begun cutting their pay and enforcing fines for taking sick days.

“These workers are victims of the epidemic of insecure employment practices across Australia, which is now affecting 40% of the workforce” Ms Kearney said.

“They are employed as individual sub-contractors, which should allow them the benefits of operating their own small business. But Foxtel does not allow them to work for anyone else and the workers have to be available seven days a week, whether it is busy or not.

“Even worse, the installers invest tens of thousands in equipment to be able to work for Foxtel, but they receive no job security. Many tell us they have not taken a holiday in years, as they can’t afford the time off or fear they won’t be given more work.

“They don’t know if they’ll be working the next day until late afternoon, or how many jobs they will get. This approach is an unfair shift of risk from business to workers and leads to enormous financial insecurity for families.

“Insecure work suits employers because it allows them to shift costs onto workers, and it is spreading into sectors that were once seen as havens for permanent and secure jobs.

“Ten per cent of the Australian workforce – more than a million people – are now contractors, and many of them are vulnerable to exactly the same exploitation. They are treated like employees, but have none of the protections or entitlements that genuine employees receive.

“Foxtel is a respected Australian brand, which should take responsibility for installers’ work conditions rather than hiding behind the cover of downstream contractors, hired through contracting firms Downer and BSA.”

Ms Kearney said Foxtel installers also missed out on many workplace entitlements and conditions – including the right to take protected industrial action and be represented by a union in collective bargaining – because they are hired as individual sub-contractors rather than employees.

Foxtel installers, supported by the CEPU telecommunications union, are making a submission to the Independent Inquiry into Insecure Work, chaired by former Deputy Prime Minister Brian Howe. For more information, go to [securejobs.org.au](http://securejobs.org.au)

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