

Embargoed to 6am, Friday, 20 August 2010

Workers to rally in western Sydney in final election protest against Liberals' job cuts and IR policies

Hundreds of workers will rally in western Sydney today (Friday) in a final protest against the Liberals' plans for thousands of job cuts and a return to WorkChoices by the back door.

The lunchtime rally at the Mt Druitt Workers' Club will hear that for working Australians and their families, the key issues in the election are protecting workers' rights and jobs, better superannuation, and securing employee entitlements.

It will be the final event in the 'WorkChoices – Whatever the name, Never Again' union and community campaign that has taken place across Australia since the election was called.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said this election is about jobs for working people and the protection of workers' rights. "It is about recognising that during the GFC the Labor Government saved hundreds of thousands of jobs – including thousands of jobs in western Sydney," Ms Kearney said.

"And it is about giving Julia Gillard credit for safeguarding workers' rights with the Fair Work laws that got rid of WorkChoices.

"If the Liberals are elected, there will be no increase in national superannuation which would increase the average 30-year-old's retirement savings by up to \$150,000. And there will no improved protection of employee entitlements, nor 2 weeks paid paternity leave for working dads.

"The Liberals opposed the economic stimulus that saved 200,000 jobs during the GFC, and will always manage the economy in the interests of big business, not working families.

"Tony Abbott and the Coalition have a long history and are on record this year as pledging to wind back workers' protections from unfair dismissal, to reintroduce individual contracts, and reduce minimum standards in awards. They have a policy of axing more than 12,000 jobs and cutting \$5 billion from public services.

"Tony Abbott is deceiving working Australians – just as John Howard did before the 2004 election, when he never sought a mandate for WorkChoices. Given their track record, working Australians can have absolutely no trust in the Liberals," she said.

Unions NSW Secretary Mark Lennon said: "The west of Sydney is the heartland of the labour movement. People here remember WorkChoices. On election day people have a clear choice between fairness at work, or a return to the past under a deceptive Abbott Government."

Mr Lennon said it was appalling the Liberal Party has failed to release a detailed IR policy in this election and that Australians should vote tomorrow on their record as the party that introduced WorkChoices. "The Liberals will bring it back if they feel they can get away with it," said Mr Lennon.

MEDIA EVENT – Workers' Election Rally

12.15pm - Friday, 20 August 2010

Mt Druitt Workers' Club, 247 Woodstock Avenue, Dharruk

Rally will be followed by media interviews with ACTU President Ged Kearney, Secretary Jeff Lawrence and Unions NSW Secretary Mark Lennon at 1.30pm.

Media contacts:

Mark Phillips ph 0422 009 011; Hamish Quinn ph 0423 375 522