



Australian Council of Trade Unions

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 4 December 2009

New Liberal plan to scrap job protections will hurt young and vulnerable workers

Liberal leader Tony Abbott's promise to exempt small business from unfair dismissal laws will expose millions of Australian workers to no job security, say unions.

The loss of protection from unfair dismissal would be a green light for employers to treat young people and other vulnerable workers badly – as occurred under WorkChoices – says the ACTU.

ACTU President Sharan Burrow said as each day passed, it was more and more clear that the Coalition is wedded to WorkChoices and would not hesitate to reintroduce hardline industrial relations laws that would hurt Australian workers.

In an interview with a national newspaper today, Mr Abbott has described the removal of unfair dismissal protection for small business employees as “good policy”.

Ms Burrow said the loss of unfair dismissal protection would worsen the effects of the Global Financial Crisis.

It would undermine the job security of working Australians while unemployment is still rising and they need it most, she said.

“The loss of protection from unfair dismissal under WorkChoices was a disaster for working Australians, particularly young and vulnerable workers, and many women,” Ms Burrow said.

“Mr Abbott has also confirmed he would reintroduce individual contracts.

“This would allow employers to remove workers' pay and conditions like penalty rates, overtime pay and public holidays.”

Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows workers on individual contracts earn up to \$8000 a year less than those employed on collective agreements.

Under WorkChoices, more than a million workers saw their real wages fall by up to \$90 a week.

Media contact: Mark Phillips ph: (03) 8676 7266 or 0422 009 011; email: mphillips@actu.asn.au

www.actu.asn.au

your rights at work — worth fighting for