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## Abbott Government owes apology to Julia Gillard, Australian taxpayers and the jobless

The Abbott Government owes former Prime Minister Julia Gillard, taxpayers and jobless Australians an apology for wasting \$50 million on a failed political inquiry instead of dealing with the jobs crisis.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said Minister Abetz has misled the public about the findings of the Royal Commission Interim Report in an attempt to prop up the Government's hapless political agenda.

Commissioner Dyson Heydon has not made any recommendations in favor of changing workplace laws contrary to the impression given by Minister Abetz today.

"The Abbott Royal Commission is a fundamentally political exercise," Ms Kearney said.

"Every Liberal Prime Minister since Billy McMahon has had at least one Royal Commission into trade unions – it's their attack of choice against their political enemies.

"What we have seen today is a desperate Government trying to make this something that it isn't.

"The Abbott Government owes former Prime Minister Julia Gillard an apology – the smoking gun wasn't there.

"The Abbott Government owes taxpayers an apology for wasting \$50 million on a failed political inquiry into their political opponents.

"And the Abbott Government owes Australia's unemployed an apology for not turning up today with a positive plan to create jobs.

"Excuse me for having hoped that with unemployment already at a 12-year-high of 6.3 per cent that the Federal Minister for Employment might've announced a jobs plan today,"

Ms Kearney said that this Royal Commission is all about politics for the Abbott Government.

"It should not be forgotten that it was the Abbott Government's decision to extend the Trade Union Royal Commission by 12 months despite advice to the contrary from the Royal Commission itself – a point confirmed by Attorney General Brandis at Senate Estimates recently.

"It should not be forgotten that Mr Abbott used the Trade Union Royal Commission to try and influence the Victorian state election.

"Our consistent view is that this Royal Commission is about attacking the ability of unions to deliver outcomes for working people – jobs, wages, conditions and safety."

Ms Kearney said the trade union movement was committed to strong, democratic and accountable unions and that without effective unions, employment conditions in Australia would go backwards.

"Union-won conditions are a fundamental pillar of the decent living standards that Australians want protected," Ms Kearney said.

"This Royal Commission is the Abbott Government's attempt to stop unions campaigning against the range of legislation already before the Parliament designed to weaken workers' protections.

“The ACTU has consistently said that criminal behaviour and corruption must be dealt with by the police and the courts and we believe the Police should be given the resources they need to make those investigations.”

Ms Kearney said the Royal Commission into Trade Unions has not investigated how major construction companies, including major publicly-listed companies have subcontracted to dubious individuals – it has just focused on trade unions.

“It’s a \$50 million PR exercise by the Liberal Government with the bill being footed to taxpayers.”

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