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## Enough is enough: Trade deals should benefit local workers

Unions condemn further moves by the Abbott Government to make it easier for international workers to fill job vacancies where local workers are seeking employment.

ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said in trade deal talks with China tomorrow that the Abbott Government was expected to make concessions that create opportunities for Chinese workers to get jobs in key occupations sought after by Australian workers.

“When will the Abbott Government come through for Australian workers because this is yet another obstacle against the local job seeker,” Mr Oliver said.

“The Prime Minister has said that only ‘specialised’ jobs will be included but there is no definition of what that means.”

“The likely reality is that ‘specialist’ refers to engineers, riggers, plant operators, IT workers and many other occupations which are often outsourced.”

“This comes as up to 350,000 Australian workers are searching for jobs in key outsourced sectors including these very occupations.”

“You also have the extraordinary situation where the Abbott Government is looking to water down 457 visa requirements so employers don’t even have to advertise locally before they hire from an international pool of workers.”

“On the one hand you have a Government saying they are staunchly against any unemployment and telling people to ‘earn or learn’ and on the other they are putting hurdle after hurdle in front of job seekers, including those with specialised skills.”

“By failing to invest locally in sectors such as the car industry, under this Government we have seen the exportation of 10,000 jobs and now the proposition to import labour.”

“Where is the investment that creates jobs? Where are the opportunities for unemployed young people? What are locals to make of a Government who would sign away jobs?”

“Trade deals are meant to be negotiated in our interests but that’s hardly the case if the jobs aren’t for Australian workers.”

“This is no way to deal with shameful levels of youth unemployment which is more than 17 percent in some areas and projected to rise.”

“We’re not in opposition to foreign workers, particularly under permanent migration. Where there is a genuine skills shortage, these workers fulfil an important role.”

“However, when you have hundreds of thousands of local workers job-searching in ‘skill-shortage areas’ you have to question why the Abbott Government would shy away from creating opportunity at a local level.”

“Whose interests are being served?”

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