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Abbott's attack on rights, wages and conditions stalls... for now

By putting the brakes on a wholesale review of workplace laws, the Abbott Government has acknowledged that the same hardworking Australians that will take a hit from their budget changes to health, welfare and education are the same people whose wages and workplace conditions will be in the firing line under this review.

ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver called on the Abbott Government to come clean with its real intentions for workplace reform.

"If Mr Abbott was serious about not attacking rights at work he would drop the whole idea of a Productivity Commission inquiry and withdraw the Bill he currently has in the Parliament to bring back unfair individual contracts," Mr Oliver said.

"Tony Abbott and his Government know the Australian people will reject their toxic views on industrial relations whenever they eventually decide to be honest about it.

"The terms of reference for this review are a complete repudiation of the Mr Abbott's pre-election promise to workers that wholesale changes were not on the agenda.

"It's clear that the Government's ultimate intention is to put the whole workplace system on trial – pay and conditions, minimum wage, rights at work, collective bargaining and unfair dismissal.

"What we're seeing at the moment is a Government reeling from the community's rejection of their unfair budget and assault on the social safety net.

"This isn't Mr Abbott backtracking on his plans to cut wages and conditions, it's a short term political calculation to avoid alerting the Australian people that he intends to make life harder for them."

Mr Oliver suggested that the Abbott Government could adopt a novel approach in its handling of workplace relations policy by actually being honest about the fact that they are 100 per cent committed to delivering workplace reform for the business lobby that will give them the green light to cut wages and conditions.

"Tony Abbott will be fielding calls from his business mates who want him to get moving so they can start cutting wages and conditions," Mr Oliver said.

"The business lobby has already announced a campaign to cut weekend rates but that's just the beginning.

"Australian Unions won't stand by why Mr Abbott and the business lobby attack the Australian way of life.

"We'll fight so hardworking Australians get a fair go."

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