

4 August 2016

Post the Abbott-Hockey years, Coalition still out of touch

The following statement can be attributed to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

Treasurer Scott Morrison has once again revealed the Coalition's hand; that the Turnbull Government is embarrassingly out of touch with working people.

Mr Morrison's comments this week that middle-aged, blue collar workers should retrain if they are out of work and not 'just stop and play golf' was unashamedly snobbish and patronisingly out of touch with the precarious and insecure nature of work in Australia.

His comment was also unabashedly sexist. Women make up half the workforce and more are retiring in poverty than ever before, fast becoming a large proportion of the homeless population.

It's outrageous to suggest that working people are playing golf when older women are still caring for their families well into older ages, without having government policies that support financial security.

We also know that working people in their 40s and 50s can struggle to be re-employed when they have been made redundant, sacked or their small business is no longer financially viable. The idea of early retirement would be a pipe dream akin to winning the lottery for nearly every working Australian.

The Coalition's entire election platform was based on delivering tax cuts to big corporations instead of helping working people, an ethos that continues this week with the big banks refusing to pass on interest rate cuts to ordinary Australians, while the government sits on its hands and refuses to clamp down in corruption and mismanagement in the financial sector.

The Treasurer constantly talks about the 'transitioning economy' but it means nothing in the face of real unemployment for people who live week to week and are saving every dollar to ensure they don't have to rely on government 'handouts' when they do stop work at the Coalition's proposed retirement age of 70.

Added to the stupidity of the Treasurer's comment is that it callously disregards the fact that the median age Indigenous men and women die is at 55 and 61, therefore never reaching retirement, while those that do mostly do not have any superannuation to live on.

ENDS

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