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## Collinsville sackings a sign of things to come under Coalition's greenfield policy

The ACTU is warning of a sharp rise in Patrick-style attacks on workers' jobs and conditions under the Coalition's policy of supporting employer-only greenfield agreements.

ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said the situation at Glencore Xstrata's Collinsville mine, where the company will shut the gates on hundreds of mineworkers tomorrow to replace them with a cheaper workforce, would be repeated many times over.

All 400 workers have had their employment terminated with the company vowing not to reopen the North Queensland mine until it can slash work conditions under a greenfield agreement or individual contracts.

"The timing of this dispute immediately ahead of a federal election is no coincidence," said Mr Oliver.

"This is not a genuine greenfield situation, it's simply that operations are being brought back in-house.

"This should be dealt with under transmission of business provisions which allow for workers to hang on to their work conditions when a business changes hands.

"But Glencore is banking on a change of government a week after it shuts operations and sacks workers – a government that will back them by promoting anti-worker greenfield agreements and individual contracts.

"This is just like the waterfront dispute where Patrick sacked its workforce to replace it with a cut-price one.

"That dispute was the precursor to WorkChoices and Patrick's actions were backed by the Coalition Government in which Tony Abbott and Eric Abetz were senior members. A leopard doesn't change its spots.

"Collinsville is a long way from most of us, but all Australian workers should be very worried about what's happening to the mineworkers at Collinsville and the implications for the rest of the workforce."

Mineworkers at Collinsville have been given termination notices effective Saturday. There are fears Glencore will hire commuting workers from outside the town, leaving the existing workforce unemployed and the community of Collinsville without the jobs that sustain it.

"If people want to complain about militancy in Australian workplaces, they can look at employer behaviour like this as a good example," said Mr Oliver.

"We need governments that will stand up against this sort of bullying, not back it in."

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