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Worker-funded ad warns voters of IR risk

A full-page ad in the Australian newspaper today reminds voters of the risks to work rights this election, the ACTU said.

The ad, funded by hundreds of small donations from union members and supporters, raises the issue Tony Abbott doesn't want to talk about this election – industrial relations.

“Throughout the campaign, Tony Abbott and the Coalition have done whatever they can to shut down reasonable discussion about the implications for workplace rights of a change of government,” said ACTU President Ged Kearney.

“As Gilmore candidate Ann Sudmalis let slip last week – ‘any workplace relations legislation is on the table after the election not before’.

“But despite the reluctance of the Coalition to talk about work rights there are enough things we do know to cause alarm.

“There is a clear danger to entitlements like penalty rates.

“The Coalition has promised a review of the Fair Work Act which will give big business a platform to pursue their vigorous campaign against fair compensation for weekend and after hours work.

“It has indicated it will back an employer application to the Fair Work Commission to slash penalty rates.

“And under the Coalition's watch the Fair Work Commission would police agreements to make sure that workers don't get a pay rise above inflation unless trade away conditions - even if it's been negotiated in good faith with the employer.

“It seems like Mr Abbott has his fingers crossed behind his back when he promises not to point Australian work laws back in the direction of WorkChoices. We're very concerned about what could be unleashed if the Coalition wins government on September 7.”

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