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New government must meet commitment that ‘no worker will be worse off’

Unions are ready to work with the incoming Coalition government to improve life for working Australians, the ACTU said today.

Australians have voted for a new government but it does not have a mandate to attack workers’ wages, rights or conditions, said ACTU President Ged Kearney.

“It should be the goal of every government to improve life for working Australians,” said Ms Kearney.

“The new government has a responsibility to govern on behalf of all Australians, not just big business.

“We stand ready to work with the Abbott government on measures to improve pay and conditions for working people and to create jobs and training opportunities.

“While we are very concerned about some aspects of the Coalition’s workplace relations plans, Mr Abbott committed before the election that no Australian worker would be worse off under his policies.

“On behalf of the union movement’s two million members and 10 million working Australians we will hold him to account on that commitment.

“If there is any sign of the new government bowing to pressure from business and going after people’s penalty rates, overtime or job security the union movement will vigorously defend those rights.

“Our message to working people is that the best way to protect your work rights and conditions is to join a union.”

The ACTU congratulates Labor on its achievements for working people during its six years in government, said Ms Kearney.

“Labor has abolished WorkChoices and restored fairness in Australian workplaces, introduced Australia’s first paid parental leave scheme and delivered equal pay for community sector workers.

“It has delivered a strong economy that prioritises jobs and delivered visionary environmental and social reform in pricing carbon and introducing a national disability insurance scheme.

“These reforms have made Australia a better place and we’ll fight to maintain them.”

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