

Friday, 13 September 2013

## Move to stop pay rises for lowest paid workers: shameful first week in government

ACTU President Ged Kearney said plans by the new Coalition Government to abandon wage increases for up to 350,000 workers in aged and childcare was in direct conflict with Tony Abbott's commitment that no worker would be worse off.

"It is a betrayal by the Coalition of some of Australia's lowest paid workers, in industries that are also largely staffed by women," she said.

"Aged and childcare workers do a very tough job and are paid very little and any move to deny their pay increases demonstrates a worrying lack of understanding."

"Aged care is one of the most important and difficult jobs there is, yet aged care workers are amongst the lowest-paid."

Ms Kearney said in order to be an effective government the Coalition and Tony Abbott would need to get a firm grasp of the challenge of an aging population and staff shortages.

"It is absolutely critical we build our aged care workforce to manage the needs of our growing population," said Ms Kearney.

"Lifting pay is central to attracting and retaining skilled workers in this field.

"Enterprise bargaining agreements that cover the entire workforce of an aged care facility are the best way to make sure that money allocated is guaranteed to deliver a pay rise, that's why the Workforce Compact is so important.

"Previously, money allocated to the aged care sector hasn't flowed through to workers.

"Tony Abbott has made the claim that no worker would be worse off if he wins government, but that claim is now farcical.

"Saying no worker will be worse off and then telling 350,000 workers they will not get much needed pay rises is a worrying way for the Coalition to launch their term in Government.

"Mr Abbott didn't want to talk about workplace policy before the election and now we see he wants to tear up an agreement that will deliver a pay rise to some of our most important and lowest-paid workers.

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