

## **ACTU congratulates Brendan O'Connor on public service to the Australian people**

The ACTU congratulates Brendan O'Connor on his public service to the Australian people.

In his 23 years in the Australian Parliament he has consistently lived out his values, delivering for the people he represented.

Brendan was a significant reformer – always looking for opportunities to make policy better for the workers of Australia.

In 2006 he led the charge in prosecuting the inherent unfairness of the Liberal Government's WorkChoices legislation, taking a parliamentary inquiry on the road to highlight the impact those laws were having on working people.

As a Minister in the Rudd/Gillard Government he reformed Australia's employment services to ensure resources were prioritised for the long-term unemployed.

He also stamped out the abuse of 457 visas, designing reforms that strengthened the integrity of Australia's migration system and protect the rights of both local and migrant workers.

As Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, he put his policy brain to work designing solutions to the problems of insecure work and the disparity in gender pay.

He committed Labor to the "same job, same pay" labour hire reform, as well as new stronger definitions of casual employment.

In his most recent role, as Minister for Skills and Training he has again improved the lives of working people striking a new National Skills Agreement providing greater access to vocational education, particularly TAFE, as well as hundreds of thousands of Fee Free TAFE and VET places.

He has also created new opportunities for apprentices, particularly through national targets for apprentices trainees and cadets on Government-funded projects.

### **Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:**

"Brendan has dedicated his working life to improving the lives of Australian workers and be very proud of all he has achieved and all he has contributed to.

"The union movement greatly respected his capacity and integrity. He always brought to any task his strong values, and sharp policy brain.

"He always kept his word and was willing to hit the road and talk directly to working people in their communities and workplaces.

"We thank him for his great service to the country and to working people."

**ENDS**

**Media Contact:** Luisa Saccotelli 0400 149 901