



MEDIA ALERT

When: Media doorstep – 1.15 pm TODAY, Monday 19 November 2007

Who: Sharan Burrow, ACTU President, Simon Cocker, Unions Tas

Where: St David's Park - cnr Davey Street and Salamanca Pl, Hobart

Tassie workers left high and dry by Work Choices as local job rate falls

Job creation in Tasmania has dropped by half since the introduction of WorkChoices 19 months ago according to a new analysis of ABS employment data.

The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics labour force data shows almost 10,000 jobs were created in the State in the 19 months before WorkChoices was introduced but there have been less than 5,000 jobs created in the same period since.

At the same time that jobs growth has plunged under WorkChoices there are up to 3,000 Tasmanians who have been left high and dry and are still waiting for the Howard Government's workplace watchdog to check whether they are receiving their proper pay and entitlements.

These Tasmanian workers are part of the massive backlog of 140,000 workers nationally who are waiting to have their workplace agreements checked by the Howard Govt's 'fairness test' to see if they are getting their proper entitlements, including penalty rates, overtime pay, rest breaks & other important conditions.

In an election that is shaping as a referendum on the Howard Govt's unfair WorkChoices IR laws, ACTU President Sharan Burrow is in Hobart today to meet with Tasmania workers dissatisfied with the lack of assistance from the Howard Govt's workplace watchdog.

Ms Burrow said:

"WorkChoices has been bad for jobs in Tasmania and bad for local workers.

"Last week the Health Minister Tony Abbott admitted what the Howard Govt had been denying but everyone had suspected, that workers have lost protections under WorkChoices.

"The fact is there are thousands of Tasmanian workers and their families who have been hurt by WorkChoices and many Tasmanians who are still waiting for the Howard Government's workplace watchdog to do what it should.

"If the Liberals win the election they will think they can go further on Work Choices and there will be more cases of local people hurt by these unfair IR laws.

"Nurses and other health workers at the Mersey hospital could be among the next wave of Tasmanians that will be forced onto lower paid AWAs if the Howard Government is re-elected.

"Unions are urging Tasmanians to send a message that they don't want Work Choices by voting against the Liberals," said Ms Burrow.

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