



Poor working conditions for Tassie health workers set to get worse under Liberals' Work Choices IR plan & advertising waste

Chronic under-staffing and poor working conditions with nurses and other health professionals often made to work double shifts at Launceston General Hospital will get worse under the Liberals' plan to go further on Work Choices if they are re-elected say unions.

The ACTU Secretary, Jeff Lawrence is in Tasmania to meet with health workers who are worried by Liberal plan to make future federal health funding for the Launceston hospital conditional on nurses and health workers being pushed onto lower paid Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) under Work Choices.

Workers on AWAs earn on average \$106 a week less than people on collective agreements, a recent university study found.

Local nurses and health workers are also incensed by the waste of \$121 million of taxpayer money by the Howard Government on advertising for its unfair Work Choices IR laws when this money could have been spent relieving the stress on Tasmanian health care workers and providing better patient services.

For example, the \$121 million wasted by the Howard Government would have funded 1500 jobs for allied health professionals or 1700 Registered Nurses across Tasmania.

ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence said:

"Eleven years of chronic under-funding of public hospitals by the Howard Government has led to nurses and health professionals in Tasmania working long hours and double shifts.

"Not only are workers missing out on seeing their families, but this has led to an alarming rate of injury among overtired and overstressed workers.

"It is outrageous that the Howard Government has wasted so much tax payers' money on advertising when it could have gone to funding our hospitals by adding more workers to the hospital rosters and reducing waiting times for patients.

"That \$121 million spent advertising the Federal Government's unfair IR laws could have funded 1500 jobs for allied health professionals or 1700 nursing positions. It's a terrible waste.

"Tasmanian nurses and health workers are also very worried their penalty rates and other working conditions will be under serious threat if the Howard Government is re-elected.

"Some health workers stand to lose more than \$200 a week in shift penalties under the Liberals' plan to move another 1.5 million Australian workers over to the Work Choices system if they are re-elected", said Mr Lawrence.

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MEDIA ALERT

When: 12:30pm Tasmanian DST

Where: Launceston General Hospital (Charles St entrance near front door)

Who: ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence and health workers from Launceston General Hospital