



## Media Release

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Friday, 28 September 2007

### **How much longer will United Petroleum workers have to wait for justice Mr Hockey?**

ACTU President Sharan Burrow and Unions Tasmania recently revealed that employees of United Petroleum, many have whom had been exploited and had significant cuts to their take home pay, were still waiting for an answer as to whether the treatment they received was legal. It is now nearly a fortnight since the Minister for Workplace relations demanded a prompt report from his department and there is still no word from him on this issue.

It is over twelve months since the matter was initially raised with the then Office of Workplace Services.

The federal government's unfair and extreme workplace laws allow provisions for 'Greenfields agreements' whereby employers can make agreements with themselves on conditions of service to apply to staff in the case where there are no existing employees.

Norvac/United Petroleum used these provisions when taking over Tasmanian Mobil outlets in 2006 to remove overtime and penalty rate provisions, public holidays, rest breaks and allowances. One staff member lost nearly 25% of his take home pay.

**ACTU President Sharan Burrow who recently visited some of the workers, said:** "Mr Hockey came out and said he wanted immediate action on this case and nearly two weeks have passed without any word. What is Mr Hockey hiding from the Tasmanian public and these workers?"

"It is clear that the Howard Government's 'Workchoices' system is broken and it is an absolute outrage that Tasmanian working families have to wait over a year to get any resolution on a clear case of unfair workplace treatment.

"We call on the government to release their findings and compensate these workers for their losses so they can get on with their lives", said Ms Burrow.

**Unions Tasmanian Secretary Simon Cocker also said:** "On Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> Sept the Minister's office said he had demanded a report on his desk first thing Monday. Where is it and why the continuing silence?"

"Can these employees have any confidence that due attention is being paid to their issues when twelve months of silence is the only reply? said Mr Cocker.

**For further comment or query Simon Cocker on 0419 402 377**

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