



Media Release

Thursday, 18 October 2007

Save our penalty rates say local nurses & health workers

A group of Tasmanian health care workers and nurses will today join nurses and health care workers from across the nation in the first major election event against John Howard's unfair WorkChoices laws.

They plan to distribute leaflets and stickers in the Brisbane St Mall, Launceston during their lunch break today.

As part of a national community campaign, nurses and health workers will today join Unions Tasmania Secretary, Simon Cocker to voice their concerns about the impact of John Howard's unfair WorkChoices laws.

Local Nurses and other health workers stand to lose up to \$284 a week in shift penalties under the Liberal's plan to push another 1.5 million Australians onto lower-paid Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) if re-elected say unions.

Mr Cocker says the Howard Government's move to take control of Tasmania's public hospitals is a back-door way of pushing nurses and other health care professionals onto wage-cutting job contracts as a condition of federal funding.

Nurses, home carers, physiotherapists, pathologists and other health professionals across Australia will be campaigning hard in their local communities today to make sure voters understand that a vote for John Howard's Coalition is a vote to push WorkChoices into hospitals and thousands of other workplaces.

Nurses and health workers work extremely hard caring for our local community, and shouldn't have to worry about their pay being cut, said Simon Cocker

They work around the clock seven days a week caring for patients and rely on penalty rates and other conditions that will be under serious threat if the Howard Government is re-elected.

A typical full time registered nurse (grade 8) working a rotating shift in the public hospital system earns up to \$15,000 a year in shift penalties - a potentially massive pay cut under the Liberal's plan.

Today nurses and health workers are sending a message to Mr Howard and Mr Costello that their pay and conditions are not up for grabs in this election.

They are asking the Australian public to make a careful, informed choice at this election, said Mr Cocker.

What:	Nurses and healthcare workers distributing leaflets & discussing the effects of WorkChoices
When:	12.30pm
Where:	Brisbane St Mall, Launceston
Who:	Unions Tasmania Secretary Simon Cocker, nurses & health workers

**For further comment or query Simon Cocker on 0419 402 377
Details of Australia wide events on following pages:**

379 Elizabeth Street
Hobart Tas 7000

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Secretary: Simon Cocker

Nurses and Health Workers Against WorkChoices Day

Nurses, pathologists, doctors, physiotherapists, community health workers and other care professionals will be doorknocking, offering free blood pressure tests, making cakes, dropping leaflets, offering information to commuters and shoppers, and speaking out in their workplaces about the effect of WorkChoices on workers who care, across Australia today.

New South Wales

10.30am ACTU President Sharan Burrow and NSW Labor Council Secretary John Robertson visit nurses at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Missenden Rd, Camperdown

12pm Sharan Burrow and John Robertson at Nepean Hospital, Penrith, for BBQ lunch with health workers

Contact: Shannon Walker 0414 694 476

Victoria

10.30am ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence, nurses and health care workers will meet outside the office of La Trobe Liberal MP Jason Wood to explain how WorkChoices is hurting the community and to ask Mr Wood if he supports the Liberal Party plan to go further with their IR changes, if re-elected. Mr Wood voted in support of WorkChoices 23 times.

83 Boronia Rd, Boronia

Contact: Lidija Ivanovski 0432 121 636

Queensland

9:30am Nurses and health workers will hold morning tea in 20 hospitals across the state, presenting "Your Rights at Work" cakes and information about WorkChoices to visitors and co-workers.

Contact: Genevieve Siddle (Qld Nurses Union) 0408 769 920

11:00am Nurses "Do Their Block" over WorkChoices

In Bundaberg, Cairns and Townsville and a number of – nurses will walk and doorknock their local neighbourhood block, explaining to local voters how WorkChoices is hurting the community and its health workers.

Contact: Tania Reeves 0418 700 419

South Australia

"Has WorkChoices sent your blood pressure sky high?"

9.30am media opportunity: nurses will be conducting free blood pressure tests and discussing the effects of WorkChoices on their jobs and the community at Tea Tree Gully O-Bahn Interchange

7am - 9.30am Free blood pressure tests at Noarlunga railway station

7am – 9.30am Free blood pressure tests at Gawler Railway station

Contact: Lee Thomas, Aust Nursing Federation 0402 795 686

October 18, 2007

Tasmania

12.30pm – 1.30pm Nurses and health workers Brisbane St Mall in Launceston to hand out flyers

Contact: Sue Wallace 0418 372 198