

Thursday 21 September, 2017

ACTU launches Change the Rules campaign in Western Australia

Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) Secretary Sally McManus will be in Perth tonight for the first state-based meeting for the Change the Rules Campaign to address inequality and give power back to working people.

Ms McManus will brief almost 200 working people who will be charged with taking the message out to union members, to bring together the entire Australian union movement to change the rules for working people.

The Change the Rules campaign, which Ms McManus will outline in meetings across Australia over the coming months, will bring back fairness to Australian workplaces and ensure working people are not held to ransom by unfair laws.

In Western Australia (WA), wage growth is at a record low. Youth unemployment is at 13.9% and household incomes are falling.

At the same time, 40 per cent of all Australians face insecure work.

The end of the mining boom has seen a handful of elites become super wealthy; while working people have seen their wages fall and have to contend with both above average unemployment and rampant youth unemployment.

Workers across WA have had their pay and conditions stripped by unfair laws that allow corporations to terminate enterprise bargaining agreements (EBA), keep wages low, cut penalty rates, and support mass casualisation and wage theft.

Maintenance workers at Griffith Coal had their EBA axed in 2016 and had their pay slashed by more than 40%, while staff at Murdoch University will have their pay cut next week after the university spent almost \$3 million on legal fees so it could reduce their wages.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“The pendulum had swung too far toward big business and Australia needs a pay rise.”

“We need to change the rules at work so working people can’t be held to ransom by bad employers who will use loopholes to cancel agreements, cut pay and slash conditions.”

“The West has suffered under Minister for Employment Michaelia Cash. She has made a career out of cutting workers’ wages and making work less secure. Her legacy will be Australia’s lowest wage growth and the highest number of people in insecure work.”

“The campaign starts here. We will brief union members on how they can help stop working peoples’ pay and conditions being destroyed by unfair laws and bad employers.”

“While Gina Rinehart and Andrew “Twiggy” Forrest have become some of the world’s richest people, jobs have dried up, housing has lost value, and people are struggling to keep up.”

“Our campaign is going to reverse the unfair workplace rules and help working people regain the power they have lost through years of neo-liberal policies that have only helped big business.”

“It’s not right that hundreds of workers in Collie had their EBA terminated and were forced to work for radically reduced wages and conditions. The Fair Work Commission decision threatened the entire community and prompted hundreds of submissions from workers and their families to a Senate inquiry into Corporate Avoidance of the Fair Work Act.”

“And it’s not fair that Murdoch University will be free to cut 3,000 staff members wages by as much as 39% next week, after it asked for its workforce’s EBA to be terminated. This alarming decision comes after years of bargaining where the university has spent millions in order to cuts its staffs’ wages.”

“Union members will be meeting across the country – in town hall meetings and workplaces – so they can change the rules and make their work fair and decent. We can only do this if working people get involved. We are inviting any worker who wants to be a part of this campaign to join us.”

ENDS

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