

Sunday, 15 April 2012

## Unions team up with OurSay.org to give all Australians the chance to question union leaders

All Australians will be given the opportunity to engage directly with ACTU President Ged Kearney through a groundbreaking collaboration with social media start-up OurSay.org.

The ACTU-OurSay *Secure Jobs for a Better Future* forum opens today during National Youth Week, allowing anyone to pose a question to Ms Kearney on any work-related topic. Users can post their own question, or vote on other questions, and Ms Kearney and a panel will answer the three most popular questions at the ACTU Youth Congress: Building the Future in Sydney on 14 May.

Ms Kearney said the OurSay forum was an exciting experiment for Australian unions and an expansion of the commitment to engage with the 2 million union members and the entire community. She said that with National Youth Week underway until 22 April, she was especially keen to hear from young people.

"I'm expecting some tough questions, but here at the ACTU we strongly believe in a transparent and accountable union movement that is willing to engage genuinely with all Australians," she said. "Unions belong to their members, and we are keen to open new channels to communicate with all workers, particularly young workers. We want to hear what working life is like for you today, what are your problems and issues, and what do you think unions should be doing to build a better future.

"I'm excited about teaming up with OurSay.org to give everyone a platform to directly raise these issues. I think OurSay.org is a great innovation that breaks down the barriers between the decision makers and opinion leaders in our society and the rest of the community, and the ACTU is thrilled to be playing a part in this democratisation of the national debate."

Ms Kearney said she was particularly interested in questions about insecure work.

"About 40% of Australians are in casual, labour hire and contract forms of work, with few of the protections and entitlements of permanent employees – like paid leave or superannuation.

"For young people entering the workforce, a casual job is a good option – but what happens then? How do you find a secure job as your life priorities change? How can the growth of insecure work be addressed, especially so that younger workers have the same options their parents did? Tell us what you think unions should be doing to meet the challenges of the modern labour market, particularly for young workers."

Eyal Halamish, CEO of OurSay.org said: "We are very excited about this OurSay. It is great to have leaders such as Ged Kearney opening herself to the public. This is a genuine opportunity to ask ACTU questions you want answered. OurSay users will have the opportunity to vote for the issues most pressing with regards to unions in Australia right now."

OurSay.org was started by a team of young people passionate about harnessing the power of social media to revitalise critical participation in Australian democracy. It aims to create a culture of active media engagement and developing critical debate in the public sphere over a longer period of time than the 24-hour media cycle.

The forum is open now at [www.oursay.org.au](http://www.oursay.org.au) and closes at midnight on 13 May.

**Media contact:**

Rebecca Tucker ph (03) 9664 7359 or 0408 031 269; [rtucker@actu.org.au](mailto:rtucker@actu.org.au)