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Abbott is trying to mislead voters and rewrite the history of WorkChoices

Tony Abbott and the Liberal Party are being selective about the history of WorkChoices in an attempt to mislead voters, say unions.

In a radio interview this morning, Mr Abbott claimed there was only one “fundamental problem” with WorkChoices and that it had been fixed by the former Howard Government.

This follows Liberal powerbroker Nick Minchin’s admission on the weekend that WorkChoices was not flawed, just unpopular with voters.

ACTU President Sharan Burrow said Mr Abbott’s claim that WorkChoices was “better” after the restoration of the so-called Fairness Test was a complete whitewash and an attempt to rewrite history.

“The ‘Fairness Test’ was put in place only after the Liberal Party realised that WorkChoices was electoral poison,” Ms Burrow said. “But the Howard Government left the rest of WorkChoices completely intact.

“The Coalition did nothing to protect workers from unfair dismissal. It retained individual contracts that allowed employers to dictate pay and conditions to teenagers and other vulnerable workers. It embraced discriminatory and unfair laws that put barriers in the way of workers bargaining collectively or being represented by a union.

“The truth is WorkChoices cut the real wages of well over a million low-paid workers by as much as \$97.75 because of changes to the way minimum wages were set.

“For Tony Abbott to go on radio and claim that WorkChoices was somehow good for working Australians and the economy is a great con, and it just shows he can’t be trusted.

“Tony Abbott is on the record as promising to bring back key elements of WorkChoices by cutting unfair dismissal protections for workers and reintroducing AWA-style individual contracts.

“In recent days Tony Abbott has sided with big mining companies who were the loudest cheerleaders of WorkChoices in vowing to block improvements to the superannuation of all Australians.

“In their hearts, the Liberals and Tony Abbott remain as committed to hardline industrial relations policies as they were in the WorkChoices days. They just won’t call it that.

“Working Australians shouldn’t be fooled by Tony Abbott’s attempt to bring back WorkChoices.”

Media contact:

Mark Phillips ph (03) 8676 7266 or 0422 009 011; mphillips@actu.org.au