

Wednesday 25 May 2016

PM needs to shut down call for return to Work Choices-style contracts

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull must publically denounce a business plan to bring back individual work contracts for Australian workers.

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) today released its business plan for the 2016 election, which outlined its commitment to bringing back Work Choices-style individual contracts that would explicitly exclude unions negotiating and bargaining for better wages.

The self-serving plan also attacked penalty rates and gave a disturbing economic blueprint for the Turnbull Government that exorbitantly favours employers over working Australians.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

“The idea of bringing back individual work contracts and stripping workers of their right to union protection is an abomination.”

“The Fair Work Act currently allows employer to offer their employees pay and conditions above the Award minimum, so ACCI’s call for a form of individual contracts is just a re-run of Work Choices, where 70% reduced pay and conditions for workers.”

“ACCI’s agenda is to cut unions out of the bargaining process so workers can be paid less for the benefit of business.”

“Prime Minister Turnbull must publically commit that if he is re-elected we are not going to see Work Choices Mark II.”

“Troublingly, ACCI has also used its plan to call for the end of penalty rates, stating that the government needs to “minimise inflexible requirements” for business and remove weekend penalties.

“There is no way to spin this argument. Penalty rates are an integral right for workers doing weekend and unsociable hours work.”

“Bizarrely, ACCI also spoke at length about its support for the mooted \$4 an hour internship program when it announced its business plan in *The Australian* newspaper this morning, but nowhere do those internships actually feature in the plan.”

“We do, however, support ACCI’s push for more apprenticeships but, given the ACTU and Australian unions have spoken at length about this issue for some time, they have come very late to the party.

“It appears that little thought has gone into how this policy would actually affect Australian workers as it seems to simply serve the purpose of supporting a conservative Coalition government and business, with no benefit to wider Australian employment or the economy.”

ENDS

Media contact: Antonia Acott 03 9664 7315