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Safety and Australian jobs at risk as unqualified ChAFTA workers flown in

Revelations that workers have been flown into the country to work unsafely are of deep concern and set a dangerous precedent, risking local jobs and safety standards.

The ACTU reaffirms its opposition to ChAFTA and warns the Prime Minister that his deal with the government of China to put workers on sites in Australia without adequate training and no knowledge of safety requirements, puts both the workers and the public at serious risk.

ChAFTA has made it possible for foreign-owned companies to bypass crucial Australian industrial laws – laws that are in place to protect workers, and to make sure any work undertaken meets Australian safety standards.

Under ChAFTA, qualified Australian workers who have the proper skills and training are being replaced by cheaper unskilled temporary migrant labour.

It is not only Australian workers that suffer under this agreement. Temporary migrant workers in Australia on dodgy safety certificates are being exploited, paid well below the minimum wage, and have no protections.

These workers also pay no income tax in Australia and have no Work Cover insurance, costing the Australian economy.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

“Malcolm Turnbull’s deal with the Chinese Government was always bad for local jobs, bad for workplace safety and bad for local communities. We are now starting to see the reality where Chinese companies are importing their own construction workers, electricians, plumbers, builders, carpenters, mechanics and many others.

“This deal means employees can come and work in Australia for less than \$10 an hour. The wage implications for local workers are unfair and compromise the integrity of Australian workplace laws.

“The most concerning aspect of this story as it’s reported, are occupational health and safety risks. These unqualified employees will be working with welding and other dangerous equipment on construction sites.”

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