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Youth unemployment crisis in Leichhardt requires real action from next government

The next government must address the youth unemployment crisis in Cairns and Far-North Queensland which has left 25% of young people without a job.

A quarter of young people in Cairns are without work, but in outback Queensland that number is over 30%, and the problem persists all the way the coast into the North, Central and South Coast of New South Wales.

The Abbott/Turnbull Government has presided over the lowest wage growth in 18 years, the decoupling of productivity and wage growth and the highest levels of inequality in 75 years.

People are working harder than ever for less pay, and are desperately trying to find extra work to make up the shortfall while they watch the richest in our society continue to get preferential treatment.

The Turnbull Government proposes to solve the rampant youth unemployment that has also been a feature of its time in office by offering young people as free labour to for-profit businesses. The PaTH program also offers no recognised qualification or meaningful training in return.

With days to go until the election, this is still all they have to offer as a solution to this huge problem.

Alternatively, the policies put forward by the ALP aim to help young people get qualifications through apprenticeships and TAFE and give them work through new requirements for use of apprentices on government projects. The ALP has also proposed a review of the 457 visa system to make sure that vacancies are filled by local workers before people are brought in from overseas.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

“People in Cairns know that something needs to be done to help young people find a job and end the cycle of joblessness that has set in in too many towns and communities across Australia. They are looking to the next government to address this massive problem.”

“At this election all Australians – and especially those who are all too familiar with the reality of high youth unemployment – have a choice between a plan that will feed young people to businesses as free labour, and one which takes sensible steps to help young people get skills, get a job, and contribute to society.”

ENDS

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