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## ACTU congratulates new Labor leader Bill Shorten

The ACTU has offered its congratulations to new Labor leader Bill Shorten after today's historic vote on the ALP leadership.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said the involvement of Labor's membership in electing a Parliamentary leader had shown the party was capable of innovating and connecting with its members.

"The challenge now for the party is to unite behind the new leader and act as an effective opposition and stop any attempt from the Abbott Government to wind back workers' rights," she said.

"Mr Shorten has a proven record as a campaigner for the rights of workers, and for progressive social policy through his championing of a disability insurance scheme.

Ms Kearney said that the new leader needed to listen to working people and develop policies that addressed their concerns.

"Labor must listen to workers' concerns about cost of living, insecure work and public services, as well as develop policies that create secure and sustainable jobs."

She said the most important job of an opposition party was to hold the Government to account and offer the public an alternative view and an alternative option at the next election.

"We need a strong alternative to policies that slash public services, reduce workers' rights and fail to support Australian jobs. The Labor Party must focus their efforts on being united towards the greater goal: connecting with the public on issues they care about."

Ms Kearney said Labor needed to build on its policy legacy from government, not abandon it.

"The Rudd and Gillard governments steered Australia through the Global Financial Crisis, put a price on carbon, laid the groundwork for better care for people with disability and better funding for public schools, as well as restoring some balance in the workplace through the Fair Work Act."

"There will be many challenges ahead and a strong opposition will ensure the government is held to account."

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