

Tuesday, 28 January 2014

Unions launch national tour as Abbott Government turns its back on the majority of Australians

ACTU President Ged Kearney will today begin a national two-week tour of workplaces to discuss the dangerous direction being set by the Abbott Government for 2014.

Ms Kearney said she will visit postal workers in Sydney, healthcare workers in Melbourne and manufacturing workers in Perth, who are among the hundreds of thousands of Australians shut out by the Government but who want their voices heard.

"The Government has mis-read the community if it thinks it can pursue an extreme agenda of privatisation, cuts to jobs and services and do it all behind closed doors with the help of Corporate Australia," she said

"Many Australians will have spent the Australia Day long weekend reflecting on what makes our nation great - the quintessentially Aussie fair go, a strong social safety net that includes a health system that cares for all Australians and a minimum wage that is a living wage.

"Yet in looking to make extreme changes to the services government provides, Mr Abbott has said that everything is on the table.

"We are on the knife edge of change in Australia and we cannot afford to allow the deep social changes underway to occur without real scrutiny."

Ms Kearney said that the Abbott Government has handed the reins of Government over to business and, via the Commission of Audit, tasked them with an extreme agenda of privatisation and cuts to jobs and services.

"Despite the Abbott Government cutting workers out of the loop, we will give them a voice," Ms Kearney said.

"I will be visiting and talking with as many workers as possible to hear what they need from their government and what they have to say about work and their livelihoods."

"If people are unsure what the Commission of Audit is or they didn't know that Corporate Australia is solely responsible for advising the Government on Australia's future then I will be discussing this with them."

"Tony Abbott has repeatedly said that business must be given free rein to lift their profits both locally and globally. At the same time he has put them in charge of advising on the 'role and scope of government' and asked them how tax dollars should be spent. A blatant conflict of interest.

"The direction the Government is taking with the exclusively business-run Commission of Audit, the constant language around workers bearing the brunt of any cost cuts while Corporate Australia is encouraged to increase profits and the staggering misinformation about wages growth and the state of the economy all spells bad news for workers and communities."

"Allowed to continue, the impact of the extreme right turn the government is taking will be felt for many, many years to come."

"Australians don't want to be treated like a number on a balance sheet. They want a government that effectively and efficiently manages the economy in a way that creates local jobs, supports local industry and provides for a better life for all Australians.

"Sadly, at the moment it seems our government is only there for the business community.

"We will be using this tour to make sure the voices of ordinary Australian workers are heard."

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