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Faces of the budget – what Tony Abbott’s plan means for workers

Australian workers demand action - not empty political rhetoric - on job creation, investment in skills and training and support for local industries in tomorrow’s budget.

Speaking alongside workers in Canberra today, ACTU President Ged Kearney will say, “It’s not in Australia’s interest to implement savage cuts to health, education, pensions, welfare and public sector jobs, while at the same time dropping the baton on training, investment and vital job creation.”

Ms Kearney will be joined by an early childhood worker, a health care worker, a security guard, a bus driver and others, who are all concerned about what’s coming up in the budget. “Workers are telling me that they’re worried about Tony Abbott’s changes to the age pension. These workers, many of them in physically demanding jobs are wondering how they’ll keep going until they’re 70,” Ms Kearney said.

“They’re worried their kids won’t be able to go to university and about vanishing job and training opportunities for young people.

“It’s time Tony Abbott came good on his promise of one million new jobs with a budget that promotes growth and opportunity.”

“Everything coming from the Abbott Government so far indicates that budget 2014 will make it harder for Australian families and workers to make ends meet,” Ms Kearney said.

“The Government’s attack on the minimum wage, penalty rates and take home pay is extremely serious. As is the loss of so many public sector jobs.

“The recent Commission of Audit report has clarified the Abbott Government’s attitude and low and middle income earners – understandably - don’t like it.

“Hiking up the retirement age, cutting the age pension and other welfare benefits, abolishing universal healthcare, charging people even more to go to university and slashing thousands of public sector jobs at the same time as they’re giving big business a \$4 billion company tax cut shows the Government’s priorities are all wrong.

“Australians expect their Government to create opportunity and prosperity and that means job creation and investment – especially for the growing number of unemployed youth.”

Ms Kearney said workers would be angry and disappointed if the budget was divisive.

“People will quickly identify if the Abbott Government has delivered a fair budget or if they simply aim to benefit big business, with ordinary Australians picking up the bill.”

“Instead of going after low income workers the Government must look at getting rid of the diesel fuel rebate for big miners or super concessions for high income earners. People are questioning why this is the time to give companies a \$4 billion tax cut?

“It’s pretty clear that the ‘age of entitlement’ is just beginning for big business.

“In the meanwhile workers are asking how they’ll see a doctor and if Mr Abbott’s changes mean we’ll soon need to pay for hospital care.

“We’ve seen lots of jobs go offshore and we know Tony Abbott has aided and abetted that, but now we’re left with a Government bereft of an industry policy that creates local jobs and supports local industry.

“Workers are worried that Tony Abbott’s budget will keep his promises to business but not to ordinary, hard working Australians.”

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