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## Medicare sell off puts thousands of jobs at risk

The Government's plan to privatise Medicare, the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme (PBS) and the Department of Veterans Affairs payments system could cost many thousands of jobs.

"Yesterday the Government delivered a 12 year high in the unemployment rate and today it has called for tenders to outsource parts of the Department of Human Services that could cut thousands of public sector jobs – it's outrageous," said ACTU President Ged Kearney.

The average salary of a Medicare worker is \$63,000 and the majority of workers are mainly based in suburban and regional areas.

"These are mums and dads on average wages who will struggle to find new jobs in areas where jobs are already scarce, particularly the thousands of them working in regional areas," Ms Kearney said.

As well as putting thousands of jobs at risk, the Government's move could mean the community pays more and gets less from Medicare.

"There is no assurance from the Abbott Government that a private company who takes over these services won't send Australian jobs overseas," said Ms Kearney.

"People shouldn't have to worry about their private and confidential data being handed over to a private company or have to wait for hours on hold to an international call centre."

Ms Kearney said this is another part of the Abbott Government's plan to kill off Medicare and end universal healthcare in Australia.

"Not only does the Abbott Government want people to pay more for medication and to visit the GP – he wants to destroy Medicare and the right of all Australians to universal healthcare.

"It's even worse that the Government has done this without any consultation with the community or the thousands of Medicare workers affected.

"Instead of paving the way for thousands of more public sector jobs to be slashed, the Government should be focussed on creating new jobs, supporting industries in restructuring and investing more money into skills and training."

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