

11 October 2008

LIBERALS WILL RETURN ACT TO UNFAIR WORKPLACE LAWS

Minister for Industrial Relations, Andrew Barr, today said a re-elected ACT Labor government will maintain fair and safe work places for ACT workers and warned a return to a Liberal government would see a return to unfair workplace laws.

“At the election in 7 days time the people of Canberra face a clear choice: a clear choice on policies, a clear choice on plans for the future and a clear choice on values,” Mr Barr said.

“Following the disastrous years of confrontation under the previous ACT Liberal government, ACT Labor has worked with business, unions and individual employees to build a workplace relations system that is fair and balanced.

“We have helped Canberrans balance work and family commitments and we are committed to new initiatives, like 18 weeks paid maternity leave and 2 weeks paternity leave, to make Canberra workplaces the best in the country for families.

“We have increased wages and conditions so that the best and brightest stay in our hospitals, schools, emergency services and public service. We have led the nation in improving workplace safety and made real improvements to employees’ conditions with the best long service leave laws in the country.

“These are workplace safety initiatives that have been voted against by the Liberals and the Greens.

“The Liberals will return unfair practices to our workplaces if elected on 18 October.

“A Liberal government will see a return to the bad old days: confrontation and conflict in workplaces and lower wages and conditions, which will increase the impact of skills shortages as workers leave ACT business as well as our health system and schools,” he said.

When they were last in power the Liberals had a record of cutting, sacking and privatising:

- The Liberals cut 114 beds from the Canberra hospital and made nurses and health professionals ‘redundant’
- The Liberals kept nurse pay at uncompetitively low levels, forcing some of our best professionals to leave the territory
- The Liberals cut teacher numbers actually forcing class sizes in schools to increase
- The Liberals tried to privatise ACTEW and ACTION, which would have cost the jobs of employees.

Media release

“Back then the Liberals called it “streamlining”. Now Liberals talk about cutting “waste” in health and “restructuring” departments. The Liberal’s language may change but the message doesn’t. Workers in our hospitals, schools and the ACT public service will lose their jobs under the Liberals.” Mr Barr said.

ACT Labor pledges to continue to work with business, unions and individual employees to deliver fair wages, safe workplaces and a stable economy.

Statement Ends

Media Contact:

Paul Kindermann 6205 1690 0403 600 955
(Minister Barr’s Office)

paul.kindermann@act.gov.au

Campaign Media Release 079/08