



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle

Media Release

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TELSTRA CONTRACTORS' WAGES SCREWED DOWN

Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson today joined with ACTU President Sharan Burrow to address a rally in protest against moves to cut the pay of Telstra sub-contractors by up to \$25,000 a year.

The skilled technicians, who sub-contract to Downer Engineering, will lose out due to a change in the definition of "rural" work that will see them paid a lower rate for a rural job.

People in the Hunter will lose out through even longer waits for essential telephone repairs.

"Many of the technicians simply won't be able to afford the fuel and time costs to do jobs after the rate is slashed," Ms Grierson said.

"Especially on top of the vehicle, superannuation, equipment and insurance costs that they are already responsible for as independent contractors."

"Telstra cannot continue to wash its hands of this dispute. It's not good enough to hide behind a contract while these workers are having their wages screwed down."

"And the Howard Government can't wash its hands either. If it succeeds in ramming its Independent Contractors Bill through Parliament, it will be even easier for contractors to have their wages and conditions cut in future."

"That's why today's protest is so important."

"The Government should not be trying to hold back incomes and reduce job security at a time when workers and their families are already faced with rising inflation, interest rate hikes and record petrol prices."

"After meeting the workers today, I will be demanding Telstra and the Minister give them a fair go."

Canberra
House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Ph: 02 6277 4221
Fax: 02 6277 8461



Newcastle
427 Hunter Street
NEWCASTLE NSW 2300
Ph: 02 4926 1555
Fax: 02 4926 1895
www.sharongrierson.com