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Federal Member for Newcastle

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## **INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS: GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA IGNORES REALITY**

Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson said today the Government was too busy peddling propaganda on its industrial relations changes to know the real conditions faced by workers on the ground.

While Workplace Relations Minister Kevin Andrews writes opinion pieces promoting his changes, and the Prime Minister spends an estimated \$20 million in taxpayers' money on mass advertising, in the real world 35 highly skilled Boeing maintenance workers remain locked out simply because they want a collective agreement.

Kevin Andrews states that the proposed IR changes will not force workers onto individual contracts that cut take-home pay. If he really believes that, he would intervene to defend the rights of Boeing workers at Williamstown against their employer that is trying to force them onto individual contracts.

Kevin Andrews states that it will continue to be unlawful for an employer to apply duress in attempting to force existing employees onto individual contracts. If he really believes this, he would take a visit to Williamstown and have a look at whether being forced onto a picket line with no pay to take home to your family constitutes "duress".

Kevin Andrews states that Labor has vowed to oppose the legislation even before we have seen the details. If he really thinks Labor should wait for the legislation before taking a position on the industrial relations changes, then surely he should wait for the legislation before spending an estimated \$20m of taxpayers' money on "information campaigns" for programs that don't even exist yet.

Government members, including the workers' local Liberal Member Bob Baldwin, should spend more time assessing the impact of their policies and less time assessing the impact of their propaganda. They don't need to look at opinion polls, they need to look at the situation of workers like those at Williamstown.

If they did, they'd understand that the right to negotiate a collective agreement is being denied, and they would join Labor in urging Boeing to take the matter to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission for arbitration.

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