



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle

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BOEING WORKERS DEMAND A FAIR GO

The human face of the Boeing dispute came to Canberra today as a delegation of workers met with Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson, Labor Leader Kim Beazley and Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations Stephen Smith.

"The Boeing Williamtown workers are desperate to get back on the job," Ms Grierson said. "They need to pay their mortgages and put food on their families' tables. But they have been ignored by the Howard Government and locked out for 70 days by an employer that refuses to negotiate a collective agreement."

"The Prime Minister says his new workplace relations regime is based on the flexibility of negotiations between individual employees and their bosses. But the plight of the Boeing workers highlights the imbalance of power when individual workers are forced to negotiate with a multinational corporation."

"It is not a negotiation at all when the employer can make a take it or leave it offer of an individual contract and then lock out its workers until they agree."

"The Government's flawed Workplace Relations Act has allowed the Industrial Relations Commission to be sidelined in this matter. Under Howard's forthcoming extreme changes to the Act, things will get even worse for workers and their families."

"These are highly skilled engineers whose job is to maintain Australia's fleet of FA-18 aircraft. This work is vital to our nation, and the workers have agreed to work for free should any emergency or security situation arise during this dispute."

"It's time for the RAAF and the Government to encourage Boeing back to the negotiating table and give these workers a fair go."

More information: Sharon Grierson, 4926 1555

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