



**Sharon Grierson MP**  
Federal Member for Newcastle

**Media Release**  
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**GOVERNMENT INSULTING AUSTRALIAN WORKERS ON RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE**

Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson today spoke in Parliament to condemn the Howard Government and the Member for Paterson for failing to take action to resolve the dispute at the Boeing Williamstown site.

The 27 highly skilled aircraft maintenance workers remain locked out simply because they are seeking a collective agreement.

"It is now over 250 days since they received their last paycheque," Ms Grierson said. "Christmas has come and gone for these workers and still not one member of the Howard Government has lifted a finger to help them."

The Government's own \$55 million dollar Workchoices propaganda campaign was supposed to "guarantee by law" the "rights of workers to have a union negotiated collective agreement."

Instead of defending these rights, the Member for Paterson said in Parliament last November that the workers were being used as "political pawns".

"This is an insult to these men and women who've just spent Christmas on a picket line," Ms Grierson said. "Let them rot seems to be the Member for Paterson and his Government's attitude."

Ms Grierson has recently visited Tasmania with Labor's Industrial Relations Taskforce, where a similar dispute involving meatworkers has been going on for almost three years.

"Although they've won their case in the Tasmanian Industrial Relations Commission and twice in the Tasmanian Supreme Court, those workers remain locked out," she said.

"Clearly, there are many workers who will be particularly vulnerable under Workchoices, and I thank the organisations and individuals who shared their stories with us."

"Unlike the Howard Government, Labor is listening to Australian workers and their families."

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