



**Sharon Grierson MP**  
Federal Member for Newcastle

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**TASKFORCE FINDS COMMUNITY UNEASE ABOUT  
WORKCHOICES RACE TO THE BOTTOM**

The preliminary report of Labor's Industrial Relations Taskforce, *WorkChoices: a Race to the Bottom*, has found that insecurity and uncertainty about WorkChoices are widespread in the Australian community.

"The Taskforce heard evidence that workers have had their wages cut, their penalty rates removed, have been shifted from full-time to casual work, and even been sacked without warning or reason," Taskforce Member Sharon Grierson said.

"People are worried that power has shifted too far in favour of employers. They are worried that they can be sacked at any time. And they are worried that if they lose their current job, they will be negotiating on their own with their next boss on a take it or leave it basis."

"These are the real stories that over 200 witnesses from all Australian states and territories gave the Taskforce. These are the real stories that the Howard Government will not listen to."

"Small business owners, such as Melbourne pharmacist George Liarakos who was at the launch today, also gave evidence to the Taskforce that WorkChoices was too complex, too confusing, and too prescriptive for employers. Small business owners are often personally closer to their staff and many believe the new laws are coercive, allowing bad employers to cut their workers' conditions and forcing good employers to consider doing the same."

"This is the race to the bottom that both employers and employees have been forced into by the Howard Government."

"Like the rest of Australia, Newcastle is beginning to feel the full force of WorkChoices. I will keep listening to the people of Newcastle and doing all I can to protect our community from these laws."

"A Labor Government will abolish unfair Australian Workplace Agreements and implement a fair industrial relations system."

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