



The Hon Craig Laundry MP

Minister for Small and Family Business, the Workplace and Deregulation
Member for Reid

MEDIA RELEASE

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Shorten's job-destroying manifesto

Bill Shorten and his union candidate for Batman, Ged Kearney have unveiled a plan to destroy jobs, kill family businesses, and shut an entire generation of young Australians out of the labour market.

“Labor’s irresponsible proposal to shove the independent umpire aside, ignore the views of the jobless and employers, and legislate for an increase in the minimum wage of nearly 30 per cent would unleash industrial chaos and put a wrecking ball through our economy,” Craig Laundry MP said.

In the past year, the Turnbull Government has delivered more than 400,000 new jobs; the largest increase ever for a calendar year. And 75 per cent of those jobs were full time.

A record high of 12,440,800 Australians were employed as at December and employment has now risen for 15 consecutive months.

But Bill Shorten and Ged Kearney now want to deliberately destroy jobs and trash that record.

“Their proposal threatens to turn the clock back decades and revisit the dark days of double digit unemployment rates, rolling strikes and constant disruption,” Mr Laundry added.

Mr Shorten’s proposal is so economically reckless that senior Labor figures, including his Shadow Treasurer and Shadow Finance spokesman, have already walked away from it.

Living wage

Bill Shorten says he wants minimum wages automatically pegged at 60 per cent of the median wage. This would mean an unprecedented increase of 28 per cent, sending a shockwave through the economy.

What will Mr Shorten say to the thousands of workers who will lose their jobs and will no longer earn any wage as a result of his proposal?

“What will he say to the owners of thousands of small and family businesses, upon whom he would impose massive costs and drive to the wall?”

Over 1.1 million small and family businesses made no profit last financial year, and this proposal could tip them over the edge, throwing thousands of their employees out of work.

Labor has done no modelling on the economic consequences of this dangerous proposal. It is nothing short of economic vandalism.

Australia’s minimum wage - which is one of the highest in the world - is set by the independent Fair Work Commission and reviewed annually. The FWC - which Mr Shorten helped set up - balances the needs of the low-paid against any negative effects on job creation and participation.

Last year the FWC increased the minimum wage by 3.3 per cent, and in the process rejected an idea similar to Mr Shorten’s.

Mr Shorten should abandon his proposal to legislate for a 30 per cent increase and instead listen to the views of his Shadow Finance spokesman, who said:

“I think it is possible to responsibly lift the minimum wage. The total amount of that, and the total extent of that, is of course subject to a whole process via the Fair Work Commission with input from all sectors of the economy, which is a good way to go about it.”

- Jim Chalmers, Sky News AM Agenda, 31 January

Bill Shorten needs to explain why is he so hell-bent on tearing down the IR system he helped create. It’s also time he was held accountable for his frequent labour market lies:

- He claims the proportion of casual jobs is increasing. It’s not - it’s been steady for the last two decades at around 25 per cent.
- He claims the use of labour hire is increasing. It’s not - it’s been around 2 per cent for some time.
- He claims the use of independent contractors is increasing. It’s not - it’s been stable for a decade at around 9 per cent.

“Bill Shorten’s plans for the economy would destroy jobs and shut down family businesses. He is a risk to the livelihood of all Australians.”

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