



MEDIA RELEASE

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WorkChoices Will Hit Young Hard

The Youth Coalition today told the ACT Legislative Assembly's Select Committee on Working Families that young people are likely to be hit hard by WorkChoices and that they are more exposed to exploitation under WorkChoices.

The research on young workers shows that they are likely to work in casual employment, be unaware of the applicable minimum wage, to have low levels of knowledge about workplace practices and occupational health and safety and to be injured in the workplace. This leaves young people extremely exposed to the deregulation that WorkChoices has initiated.

While the ACT Government is unable to change the legislation, there is a range of measures they can adopt to help protect young workers. This includes funding a legal advice service for young employees and to develop an education campaign delivered through schools and community organisations that ensures all young people have access to information about workplace practices such as agreement making and their rights at work.

Luke Bo'sher, Policy Officer at the Youth Coalition, said "The impact of this legislation on young people is going to be significant and for most young people, it's not going to be beneficial. Removing protected conditions such as penalty rates for a entire cohort of workers that depend upon penalty rates to make their substandard wages liveable will drive young people further below the poverty line"

"Young people's wages are already extremely low, in many instances they are below the poverty line. Some young people working fulltime in well known retailers are working fulltime for as little as \$282.50 per week. This drives young people into poverty and should be seen as completely unacceptable by the ACT community"

For further information or comment contact Luke Bo'sher on 0402-765-339.