



media release

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GOOD TRY MR HOCKEY: THE ANF REAFFIRMS ITS OPPOSITION TO WORKCHOICES

The ANF claimed today that Joe Hockey should be the last person to talk about misleading political campaigns.

"Mr Hockey is clutching at very thin straws if he thinks the opposition of one branch, which makes up less than 10% of the membership of a national union, has any significance when it comes to the strength of union opposition, led by the ACTU, to the WorkChoices legislation", Jill Iliffe, national secretary of the Australian Nursing Federation, said today.

"Mr Hockey knows well that the ANF, which represents over 150,000 nurses nationally, is not affiliated to any political party and judges issues on their merit", Ms Iliffe said.

"Nurses however have never been afraid to be politically active when the need arises; whether that be quality nursing care; standards, education, aged care, occupational health and safety, staffing levels, working conditions or remuneration. Nurses follow the tradition of one of the greatest political activists of all time, Florence Nightingale.

"The ANF is affiliated with the ACTU, which is the umbrella organisation for trade unions. The ANF national executive (of which the ANF WA Branch is a member) took the decision to support the ACTU campaign opposing the WorkChoices legislation.

"However the ANF, as a federation of independent State and Territory Branches, is also a democratic organisation in that State and Territory Branches determine whether they will or will not be involved in particular national campaigns. All the ANF Branches, apart from the WA Branch, are wholeheartedly behind the ACTU campaign to oppose WorkChoices. While the ANF would have liked their WA Branch to support the campaign also, the Branch has the democratic right not to be involved if that is their choice and that choice is respected.

"Let me make it very clear", Ms Iliffe said, "the ANF is opposed to the WorkChoices legislation. The legislation is harsh and unfair; it puts the balance of power in the workplace with employers; and it contravenes international industrial relations conventions. WorkChoices has already had negative effects on nurses' working conditions and remuneration, particularly in the aged care sector, but ultimately, all nurses are at risk. And without decent working conditions and remuneration for nurses, the wellbeing of the Australian community is also at risk.

"If Mr Hockey wants the union movement to stop campaigning against WorkChoices, then all he has to do is convince John Howard to repeal it".

Media inquiries

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