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Back to the Future starring Sally McManus: ACTU's new comedy leaves nobody laughing

Steve Knott, Chief Executive.

Response to Sally McManus, ACTU Secretary, Speech at National Press Club.

If Sally McManus wants us all to jump in her DeLorean time machine and go back to the 1980's, she'd be shocked to find 17% interest rates, unemployment at 10%, out-of-control inflation and an economy in dire need of serious microeconomic reform to catch up with the rest of the world.

The fact is Australia has come a long way since we last regularly saw the type of boring, extreme-left class warfare rhetoric the new ACTU Secretary is trying her hardest to resurrect.

Other inconvenient truths for the ACTU include:

- In 2008, following 18 years of labour market deregulation from successive Labor and Coalition governments, Australia's unemployment was at a historic low of 3.9%. Real wages were growing year-on-year and our economy was in such great shape we would escape the GFC relatively unscathed by global standards.
- Casual employment, labour hire and independent contracting has been stable for the past 20 years and remain small elements of our national labour force.
- The Fair Work system Sally claims is 'broken' was co-authored by her ACTU predecessors in collusion with the former Labor government, and then made even more favourable to unions in 2012 by now-Opposition Leader Bill Shorten.
- The ACTU's campaigns for unrealistic minimum wage increases and penalty rates will cost jobs and put small business owners out-of-business.
- The Fair Work Commission which Sally claims is 'stacked' is in fact stacked in the unions' favour. There are 40 tribunal members, 22 of which are ALP appointed and/or have links to the union movement or Labor Party. The President is an ex-ACTU boss and one of his Vice President's a former Federal ALP candidate.

Given her willingness to stretch the truth and rely on 'fake news' to support the ACTU's new campaign, perhaps the only fact that really matters to Ms McManus is that of union membership numbers – dropping from 46% in 1986 to around 9% in the private sector today.

Addressing this relevance slide is the real driver of the ACTU's aggressive anti-business new campaign rhetoric, but the rest of Australia has long moved on.

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