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One year in and Abbott's carefully crafted attack on rights at work is on track and only just warming up

While the cruel and unfair changes to education, health and the pension have dominated Tony Abbott's first year in office, his Government's carefully crafted attack on workers rights has been gearing up in the background.

"The Abbott Government has a clear agenda to chip away at workplace laws protecting workers' rights, wages and conditions by 'evolution not revolution'," said ACTU President Ged Kearney.

This includes:

- The Fair Work Amendment Bill that goes further than the Howard Government did in stripping away protections around individual contracts
- A Productivity Commission review of Australia's entire system of workplace laws with draft terms of reference that may as well have been written by big business
- Plans to set up an appeals body allowing employers to challenge and overrule decisions by the independent umpire, the Fair Work Commission
- Targeting the construction industry with different and harsher laws than any other industry through the Australian Building and Construction Commission and Building Code
- The Bill to amend the Fair Entitlement Guarantee will cut protection of workers' redundancy payments where their employer is insolvent
- Review of transfer of business protections for state public sector workers where their work is outsourced as well as the rights and protections for outworkers in the textile, clothing and footwear industry
- The Registered Organisations Bill that will hamstring unions in red tape ensuring they can not effectively represent workers or campaign to raise community awareness
- Wasting \$54 million on a political witch hunt through the Royal Commission

"The Abbott Government can repeat their mantra of 'evolution not revolution' all they like - but no one should be fooled, there is a comprehensive, calculated plan to strip away workers' rights and wages," said Ms Kearney.

"Remember, this is the same language the Liberals used to describe their workplace policies last time. All that has really changed is the name.

"This is evolution, not revolution, and there is still a long way to go."

Liberal Senator Nick Minchin, speech to HR Nicholls Society, 3 March 2006

"Whatever the Government calls it and however they plan to do it, the end result is still the same – workers will be worse off under Tony Abbott's anti-worker agenda. Just because they're not shouting it from the rooftops doesn't mean it isn't happening.

"The Government has no mandate for these changes. It's an attack on the rights of millions of Australian workers that goes way beyond what was flagged at the election.

"We've seen Tony Abbott target the most vulnerable in our society and attack the living standards of all Australians in his first year in office – there is no doubt he has workers in his sights for the second year."

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