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Civil Service Association of WA

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Thursday, June 27, 2013

Transport assessors walk off job over privatisation plans

Department of Transport driving assessors walked off the job today to protest over plans to privatise more driver assessments and vehicle examinations in Western Australia.

Assessors from the nine metropolitan licensing centres will meet at Solidarity Park near Parliament House to protest at the Barnett Government's plans to sell off the services to the private sector that could potentially compromise driving standards.

Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association Branch Assistant Secretary Rikki Hendon said the Barnett Government's privatisation agenda was pretty clear.

A six-month trial is currently underway in Bunbury where South-West driving schools have become both instructors and assessors for truck driving assessments.

In State Parliament last week Transport Minister Troy Buswell confirmed truck assessments in other centres would be rolled out if the trial was successful and would be followed by other classes with motorbike licences next.

"The Barnett Government's privatisation agenda is pretty clear," Ms Hendon said.

"Our members believe that privatising these essential public services will compromise standards.

"It is not a good look for profit-driven companies to teach someone to drive but then fail them as it would reflect badly on their reputation."

Ms Hendon said the government-employed assessors tested to a standard that was the same right across Western Australia but stressed there would be no guarantee of the standard being maintained if it was privatised.

In September 2012 it was revealed that up to 650 truck drivers in Victoria were given heavy vehicle licences in exchange for cash and without testing by an employee of a private company.

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“Why would the Barnett Government consider doing something similar in Western Australia with an unregulated industry where there could be corruption?”

“The only way to ensure safe standards were met was for assessments to remain in the hands of independent department assessors.”

Ms Hendon said they would demand that Treasurer Troy Buswell and the Department of Transport immediately stop further privatisation of licensing centres, including the truck trial in Bunbury.

“Our members have also not ruled out rolling stoppages if the government and senior department officials do not communicate how road safety and job security will be maintained.”

FOR COMMENT:

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