



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 11 February 2016

Latest Cutbacks Threaten OSH Workshops for Business Owners

More employees will be seriously injured or killed at Western Australian worksites as the Barnett Government shreds Worksafe resources and programs and decimates functions at the Department of Commerce.

That's the dire warning from the Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association that is worried about the future of staff who are earmarked to lose their jobs.

The latest area tipped to become victim to the government's cuts is the Publications and Campaigns branch.

This corporate stakeholder engagement branch manages vital, cost-neutral workshops that liaise with occupational safety and health representatives and business owners across WA.

The union understands some of this stakeholder engagement will be replaced by a pilot social media program, trivialising the serious information being disseminated.

This is on top of the government not filling 10 vacant inspector positions and other support staff roles last year.

CPSU/CSA branch assistant secretary Rikki Hendon said the latest cutbacks were just another example of the Barnett Government abandoning its obligations to frontline services.

"WorkSafe is an area that should not be compromised," Ms Hendon said.

"On average every 21 days in WA someone will die from injuries sustained in a workplace and given that nearly 17,000 people suffered lost-time injuries in 2013-14 it is not something that should be taken lightly.

"The Barnett Government should be investing more into WorkSafe programs, adopting a proactive approach rather than a reactive one."

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Ms Hendon said this is an agency that is responsible for protecting businesses and making sure individuals and communities are safe.

She said staff were worried that a lot of safety and awareness campaigns would be reduced and scrapped – at a time when people were still being injured in high numbers in workplaces.

“The quality of these services will not be there.

“People are still dying in workplaces and it is important to facilitate face-to-face stakeholder workshops with businesses to help them understand their safety obligations.

“The forced cutbacks will mean quality programs will be cut and replaced with inferior products that some suspect could be contracted out later on and end up costing the government more.”

FOR COMMENT:

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