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MEDIA RELEASE

TASMANIAN LIBERALS PUSH FOR WORKCHOICES ON WATER

Tasmanian Federal Liberal members have today exposed the Abbott Government's secret agenda to impose third world wages on Australian shipping workers.

Federal Liberal member for Lyons, Eric Hutchinson supported by member for Braddon, Mr Whiteley and member for Bass, Mr Nikolic proposed a motion to unpick Labor's strong industry-backed coastal shipping reforms that ensure fair conditions and safety in the maritime industry.

Instead of acknowledging the complexities of shipping and the positive change Labor's reforms are leading, the Liberal Party, true to form, is again trying to rip off Australian workers.

They wouldn't pay third world wages to truckies or rail workers, so why maritime workers in Australian waters?

The Liberals said WorkChoices is dead, but it's obviously not dead in the water.

They also failed to justify why the Abbott Government has not responded to the Productivity Commission Report into Tasmanian Shipping and Freight they commissioned 15 months ago and received more than 10 months ago.

The Abbott Government came into office with a promise to support Tasmanian exporters but can't even respond to their own report, let alone take any action.

It shows a complete disregard for Tasmanian exporters and yet more broken promises from the Abbott Government.

In government Labor expanded the scope of the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme, acted to support and build new export industries through the \$100 million Jobs and Growth plan, invested in ports and rail infrastructure and developed a \$40 million package to help exporters improve freight efficiency.

Simplistic scapegoating like blaming all shipping challenges on payment of Australian rather than third world wages to seafarers across Bass Strait is not part of the solution.

The only progress we've seen from either the State or Federal Liberal Governments is the re-announcement of talks on an international shipping service that State Labor commenced eight months earlier at a tenth of the cost.

The Tasmanian Federal Liberal members' failure to achieve anything on this matter exposes their lack of influence inside caucus and the Abbott Government's lack of interest in supporting the Tasmanian exporters they promised so much.

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