

05 Aug 2015 2:00 PM AEST - WorkSafe protest meeting

Wednesday August 5, 2015



WorkSafe protest meeting

What: WorkSafe protest meeting.

Where: In front of Mason Bird Building, 303 Sevenoaks Street, Cannington.

When: From 12pm, Thursday, August 6.

Who: CPSU/CSA branch assistant secretary Rikki Hendon, Unions WA president Meredith Hammat and Shadow Minister for Commerce Kate Doust will be available for comment.

Public servants will hold a protest meeting in Cannington tomorrow, criticising plans to reduce the presence of WorkSafe in Western Australia.

The Department of Commerce has announced plans to not fill 10 vacant inspector positions as well as scrapping the Community Education unit and cutbacks to training and development and the library.

In total 17 positions will disappear.

Staff are not happy with the decision (that is subject to a three-week consultation process) and believe the proposed cuts will put the safety of WA employees at risk.

The department plans to cap the number of inspectors at 93 and claims they were unable to fill the vacant positions, something the union challenges.

Community and Public Sector Union/Civil Service Association branch assistant secretary Rikki Hendon said if the Barnett Government was committed to reducing the number of serious and fatal workplace incidents it should do everything in its power to ensure the positions were filled, not abandoned.

“We are only talking about 10 inspector positions here and given there has been a recent downturn in the mining industry we believe there are experienced personnel capable of filling the gaps,” Ms Hendon said.

“The cutback in support positions will mean WorkSafe inspectors will spend more time behind a desk rather than being in workplaces.

“The real risk, particularly with the abolition of the Community Education branch, is that WorkSafe will become a reactive agency rather than a proactive one and more people will become injured as a result.

“They will still respond to the more serious cases straight away but will be limited in investigating lower-priority calls.

“Given the high number of workplace incidents in WA over the last year or so, there is a need for more of these positions, not less – we all deserve the right to go to work, not get injured and return home safe to our families.”