

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Grylls and Nationals must stand up for regional workers**

UnionsWA has called on National Party leader Brendon Grylls to stand up for regional workers and block any moves by Troy Buswell and the Liberals to introduce WorkChoices-style changes to Western Australia's workplace laws.

UnionsWA Secretary Simone McGurk made the demand as UnionsWA launched a new 30 second commercial on regional television that calls on Mr Grylls to focus on improving health, education, policing and other public sector services, rather than supporting Liberal Party moves that damage the working conditions of public sector workers in regional WA.

Ms McGurk said she recognised that the Nationals took their balance-of-power role in the WA Parliament very seriously and called on them to stand up to the Liberal Party and protect workers in regional WA.

"Troy Buswell and the Liberal Party recently appointing a former Howard Government industrial relations advocate to review the State industrial relations system and recommend areas for legislative reform in areas including individual versus collective agreements, the award safety net, minimum wages, statutory minimum conditions of employment and unfair dismissal," she said.

"There is little doubt that the Liberals are planning big changes to Western Australian workplace laws and, going on the track record of the previous Court and Howard Liberal Governments, those changes are likely to include the introduction of WorkChoices-style individual contracts, the weakening of the award safety net and the cutting of minimum standards in WA workplaces.

"Health, education, policing, child protection and other important public sector services are already suffering because of Troy Buswell's arbitrary 3 per cent budget cuts.

"The introduction of WorkChoices-style changes will make it harder to attract and retain public sector workers, particularly in the new Gorgon-led boom, where the private sector will be seeking to attract workers with better pay and conditions. This will be felt particularly hard in regional WA, where it is already difficult to attract and retain public sector workers.

"In the recent retail trading hours debate, Mr Grylls has shown that he is ready to oppose Liberal Party policy that he does not agree with. I call on him to show the same strength of

character to stand up to Troy Buswell and the Liberal Party to both protect the rights of regional workers and ensure that public sector services are provided to a high standard in regional WA.

Ms McGurk called said Mr Grylls should provide a guarantee to regional workers that he would oppose any moves by the Liberal Party that:

- Saw the introduction of WorkChoices style individual contracts in Western Australia;
- Eroded minimum standards or the award safety net system in Western Australian workplaces;
- Undermined the role of the WA Industrial Relations Commission as the independent umpire;
- Eroded protections against unfair dismissal; and
- Led to a deterioration in the quality of public services in regional WA.

More information about the campaign can be found at [www.noworkchoicesinwa.com](http://www.noworkchoicesinwa.com). The new television commercial goes to air this Sunday night and can be viewed on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/noWorkChoicesWA>.

Ends.

**MEDIA CONTACT: Simone McGurk, UnionsWA, 0407 199 890**