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MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS, NURSING, AGED CARE, POLITICS

Abbott misrepresents Nurses' Union

Assistant Federal Secretary of the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF), Lee Thomas said comments by the Federal Opposition Leader made about the union in Federal Parliament yesterday (3:10pm 8 Feb.) were completely false and should be corrected.

Ms Thomas said the statement made by Mr Abbott in the Parliament that the nurses union "says the government's scheme (Fair Work Act) is worse than Workchoices.." has never been made by an official of the Australian Nursing Federation.

"In a speech about being honest with the Australian people he put words in the mouths of nurses that we never said.

"This statement then must be corrected or he has misled the Australian Parliament," Ms Thomas said.

"The ANF was very active in the "Your rights at work campaign" during the last Federal election because nurses were committed to getting rid of WorkChoices.

"The stripping back of awards and the introduction of Australian workplace agreements under WorkChoices threatened to undermine the wages and conditions of nurses across the entire health system.

"To compare award modernisation to WorkChoices is like comparing a bit of cough to getting pneumonia.

"There is no doubt aged care nurses are disappointed with the decision on salary rates made by Fair Work Australia in establishing the new Federal award for aged care nurses.

"Our appeal against the decision of the independent umpire was supported by the Federal Government.

"While the decision was not what we hoped for it should be acknowledged the support the Rudd Government has provided to our case," Ms Thomas said.

Lee Thomas Assistant Federal Secretary

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The ANF, with 170,000 members, is the professional and industrial voice for nurses and midwives in Australia. For more information, go to www.becausewecare.org.au.

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