

## FIGHTBACK

Organiser Ian Gemmell believes labour hire sector conditions will improve

## What a rip-off

The CFMEU is calling on building companies to stop using the Chinese-based company Chevalier after it continued to rip off its workers.

CFMEU delegate Mario Barrios says there has been nothing but problems with the company that imports windows, curtain walls and doors from China to erect on Sydney city sites.

"It's taking 12-13 weeks for subbies to get paid," Barrios says.

In one case a sub-contractor went broke while waiting for payment.

On top of that the company keeps trying to bring in workers from China to erect its fittings.

Barrios says the company's safety standards are appalling with the fittings brought in in rusted and damaged steelage.

"We're lucky that we had a good crew on the forklift and crane, who refused to move it."

Barrios says the main developer has been on workers' sides when they have stopped work over safety issues and has stepped in to secure payments for some subbies.

However, Barrios fears the company will succeed in its bid to bring in its own workers from China to install the fittings.

"These people think they are in China and can ignore safety regulations here," he says.



# Union push to weed out the 'Dodgy Brothers'

**The introduction of WorkChoices** hit the labour hire sector harder than most. Now CFMEU Organiser Ian Gemmell is spearheading a campaign to get "Dodgy Brothers Ltd" out of the game to help legitimate operators.

Gemmell says it wasn't just workers who were hurt by the changes that Howard introduced with WorkChoices.

"There are labour hire companies that want to do the right thing by their staff," Gemmell says.

"But suddenly there were all sorts of grubby blokes coming in and undercutting the genuine companies."

While the CFMEU was able to maintain hourly rates throughout the assault, conditions such as travel allowances were lost and the four-week clause, which gave workers the right to permanent jobs after working full-time with EBA companies for a month.

"Under Howard that clause became prohibited content, which effectively meant they all became casual workers," Gemmell says.

He also points out that the Host clause was removed, which ensured labour hire workers received the same productivity allowances as other workers on the site.

"We really did take a beating," he admits, but

with the change in government the CFMEU believes it is time to fight back.

"We are mounting a campaign this year to get some of the lost conditions back for labour hire workers," he says. "And we plan to mount our own taskforce to target dodgy companies and make sure they are paying workers correctly."

"We are counting on members to tell us if any dodgy labour hire companies are working on their site."

Gemmell says labour hire workers are often short-changed in their pay packets in areas such as superannuation payments.

"Under Howard we had cases where workers were told they would have to pay their own super and long service leave," he says.

"Because of the atmosphere during that time a lot of blokes were nervous about raising complaints."

He says the arrival of the Rudd Labor Government has already had an impact.

"There is a lot of positivity out there and workers are coming forward and exposing companies with dodgy practices," he says.

"But we're not going to get back the conditions we lost under Howard overnight."

"It took New Zealand Labour many years to undo the damage from the National Party."

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