

Workers 'forced to sign away conditions' [AU] ^[1]

Author: Sydney Morning Herald

Source: Sydney Morning Herald

Format: Article

Publication Date: 15 May 2009

AVAILABILITY
See text below.

EXCERPTS

Childcare workers at defence department-owned centres are being forced to sign away their unfair dismissal protection, the childcare workers' union says.

The Brisbane-based B4Kids group won government contracts in April to take over defence's 21 childcare centres following the collapse of the industry giant ABC Learning.

One of these facilities, at Williamstown, north of Newcastle, has also sacked two women on maternity leave.

The Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers' Union (LHMU) says the B4Kids centres have forced long-serving staff to sign contracts under which they are classified as new workers and lose unfair dismissal protection if they are sacked within six months.

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Kylie Kurtz, who is 39 weeks pregnant, and Susan Hayne, who has a 10-week-old baby, received letters from ABC Learning receiver McGrathNicol telling them B4Kids would not be offering them employment as they were "redundant to the needs of the business".

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Meanwhile, about 150 workers at 15 unviable ABC Learning Centres will finish up at their jobs on Friday.

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- reprinted from the Sydney Morning Herald

Region: Australia and New Zealand ^[2]

Tags: privatization ^[3]

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