

undermine construction workers' ability to maintain good working conditions through their unions.

Since these laws were introduced, nearly 100 people have been forced to attend secret interrogations by the ABCC about everyday workplace matters. If they refuse to attend or answer questions, they can be jailed for six months!

The penalties for breaking these laws are unprecedented in Australian workplace law and do not apply even in criminal cases.

### **BUT HOWARD'S GONE. WHY DO WE STILL HAVE THESE LAWS?**

The election of a Rudd Labor Government was welcomed by the union movement because we all

expected change for the better for working people.

While the Rudd Government has promised to deliver fair IR laws, it insists on keeping the ABCC until at least 2010.

Consequently, the unfair laws are still intact and so is the organisation that enforces them. The ABCC employs 150 enforcers and \$33 million dollars of our money pays for them to harass, intimidate and use whatever action they choose to pursue construction workers.

The United Nations' International Labour Organisation (ILO) has condemned these unfair laws several times and ILO representatives have made personal appeals to the federal government to abolish them and the ABCC.

# **Rally for civil rights Dec 2**

### **WHO IS AFFECTED?**

Construction workers can face \$22,000 fines and loss of pay if they stop work for any reason. Workers cannot even stop work over safety issues in an industry where, on average, one worker is killed every week.

#### **Some examples:**

- A 19-year-old apprentice was targeted after he and other workers took action over a safety incident in which a workmate received a serious injury. He was hauled into an ABCC interrogation and questioned.
- Brodene Wardley was a safety officer on a Warrnambool job when she helped resolve a safety issue. Long afterwards, she was interrogated by the ABCC.
- In WA, 107 workers were fined thousands of dollars for industrial action they took in support of their sacked union delegate.
- Several workers in regional NSW are being prosecuted by the ABCC after they complained about maggots that were found in food at their camp.
- Four mobile crane operators were forced to attend interrogation at the ABCC HQ after their employer asked them to leave a site when they complained that there were no toilet or eating amenities for them!
- A university lecturer has also been threatened with imprisonment and forced to attend an ABCC interrogation after he witnessed an incident on a city street as he passed a construction site.
- Victorian CFMEU Senior Official Noel Washington who had the possibility of a jail sentence for refusing to answer questions about a union meeting he attended last year. After a community campaign charges were dropped.

**Give workers in our construction industry the same rights as other Australians.**

For more information, go to [www.rightsonsite.org.au](http://www.rightsonsite.org.au)