



NEWS RELEASE

Sharon Bird MP
Federal Member for Cunningham

ORRCON SAGA: TIME FOR ANSWERS

Federal Member for Cunningham, Sharon Bird, has today requested the Commonwealth Auditor-General investigate the \$486,500 Port Kembla Industry Facilitation Fund (PKIFF) grant provided to Orrcon Operations at Unanderra following the revelation that it had sacked at least 27 workers

Ms Bird said that Orrcon Operations had been given the funding grant under the PKIFF and had agreed to create 14 direct jobs.

“It is time that we get to the bottom of this especially after allegations were made in the media in the last week suggesting that the jobs promised have not been created and that some of the grant funds have been siphoned inter-state.

“The company has been reluctant to explain its decision; Senator Concetta Fierravanti-Wells has been hiding from the issue despite announcing the grant approval with the Minister for Industry, Tourism and Resources late last year.

“There is taxpayer’s money involved in this grant and it is simply not good enough that we have had stone-walling and silence from the company, the Senator, and the Howard Government.

“The PKIFF grant was provided to the company to create jobs in Wollongong: 14 direct jobs were promised in exchange for the \$486,500.

“We are entitled to know what happened to that grant, and entitled to know whether those promised jobs have been delivered.

“The Senator announced the grant with the Minister, yet despite serious allegations having been made publicly, no-one in Wollongong is any closer to knowing the facts or the reason for the termination of at least 27 workers at Orrcon Operations”, Ms Bird said.

“I am absolutely appalled that no-one is taking any responsibility to explain how a company provided \$486,500 in taxpayer’s money to create 14 direct jobs can then dismiss at least 27 workers.

“There are other serious allegations involving the grant, which require answers: the Senator should be in a position to assure Wollongong taxpayers that the \$486,500 is fully accounted for and that the promised jobs were created”, she said.

Ms Bird said that she had written to the Commonwealth Auditor General requesting an independent investigation to ensure that the PKIFF funding provided to Orrcon Operations has been fully and properly accounted for.

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