

ALERT

9 MAY 2013

Coalition releases long awaited workplace relations policy

Today, the Coalition released its long awaited workplace relations policy in the lead up to the September election.

The policy, entitled *'The Coalition's Policy to Improve the Fair Work Laws' (Policy)*, is part of the Coalition's Real Solutions Plan, which aims to create one million jobs, lift real wages and improve the competitiveness of Australian businesses.

At the forefront of the Policy is the retention of the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) (**Act**). Opposition Leader Tony Abbott said that the Policy will retain and improve the Act by delivering a new paid parental leave scheme, revisiting union right of entry provisions and re-establishing the Australian Building and Construction Commission.

Mr Abbott has also said that the Policy will:

- Provide better protection for members of Registered Organisations
- Provide practical help to small business workplaces
- Guarantee workers the right to access fair flexibility
- Create realistic timeframes for greenfield agreements
- Ensure union right of entry provisions are sensible and fair

- Promote harmonious, sensible and productive enterprise bargaining
- Ensure the laws work for everyone (and an independent review by the respected Productivity Commission will be undertaken)
- Deliver a genuine paid parental leave scheme and lift female participation rates in Australian workplaces
- Ensure workplace bullying is comprehensively addressed
- Urgently review the Remuneration Tribunal for the trucking industry
- Implement many recommendations from the Fair Work Review Panel report
- Give underpaid workers a better deal

Mr Abbott has ruled out the re-introduction of Australian Workplace Agreements, stating that this Policy *'will not be another WorkChoices'*.

Unfortunately, the current state of the unfair dismissal regime and penalty rates has not been addressed by the Policy, with Mr Abbott

stating that the Coalition would wait and see what impact Labour's recent changes to unfair dismissal laws would have before making any changes, and that penalty rates should remain within the realm of the Fair Work Commission.

Mr Abbott said that he would seek to have the Policy before parliament within 3 months of a change of government and that the Policy would remain unchanged for the first term of a coalition government.

A copy of the Policy can be downloaded from the following website: <http://www.tonyabbott.com.au/LatestNews/PressReleases/tabid/86/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/9181/The-Coalitions-Policy-to-Improve-the-Fair-Work-Laws.aspx>

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