

# A SNAPSHOT OF AUSTRALIA'S INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM 2010

1. Australian businesses and employees would continue to aspire to, and achieve, higher standards of living.
2. Unemployment would be lower, and remain structurally lower even during periods of economic downturn.
3. Jobs would be more readily available for new entrants or employees returning into the labour market. There would be significantly fewer impediments to hiring new staff.
4. Policies which reduce the cost of employment would be given the highest priority by governments.
5. There would be less employment regulation. Remaining regulation would be simple, flexible, non prescriptive, regularly reviewed and apply only as a genuine safety net.
6. The shared interests of employers and employees would be the overriding factor regulating workplace relations cultures, structures and outcomes.
7. In the majority of Australian workplaces, actual wages, employment conditions and day to day working arrangements would be determined by agreement.
8. Workplace agreements would exist both with groups of employees (collectively negotiated) and with individual employees. There would be increasing use of both collective and individual agreements in the one workplace.
9. The quality and effectiveness of workplace agreements would improve, and there would be an increasing divergence in the content of agreements between workplaces and within workplaces.
10. Workplaces would increasingly develop their own structures for direct management and employee consultation, workplace bargaining and for handling grievances and disputes. Employers and employees would be more aware of their rights and responsibilities.

11. Representatives of employees and employers, including unions and business associations, would actively and constructively participate in providing services to members seeking assistance in making collective or individual agreements.
12. Formal requirements for the making and approval of workplace agreements would be minimised.
13. There would be 'opting out' arrangements from the formal system for best practice workplaces.
14. There would be an increasing focus in workplace agreements on mutual interests, on the sharing of business performance, and on balancing work, family and lifestyle.
15. The labour market would have a productive and entrepreneurial character, including through the use of contract labour services, particularly by higher skilled workers.
16. Wages and wage increases negotiated in collective and individual agreements in workplaces would overwhelmingly be linked to productivity, performance, career development, and business conditions.
17. A single minimum adult wage and single minimum youth wages would guard the interests of the low paid.
18. There would be a more rational interface between the industrial system, and the tax, welfare and superannuation systems.
19. Industrial tribunals would increasingly provide voluntary conciliation and mediation services, and private or voluntary arbitration.
20. Industrial awards would only operate as a safety net of essential minimum standards. Work practices, actual conditions of work, and implementation of standards would mainly be determined in individual workplaces.
21. Over time, minimum legislated standards on core employment conditions would replace the need for most awards, and awards would become simpler.
22. Compulsory arbitration would be restricted to disputes seriously affecting the economy and public interest.

23. There would be widespread recognition of freedom of association and voluntary unionism, both in theory and in practice.
24. Unions and business organisations that establish a service oriented culture for members would prosper.
25. There would be fewer disputes and grievances as workplace relations becomes more co-operative and less ideological. Levels of industrial action in Australia would for the first time in the modern era reach a level that equates with our major international competitors.
26. There would be increasing use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms for the speedy, low cost settlement of actual workplace grievances or disputes. Different dispute settlement approaches would emerge between demands for higher wages or more benefits, as opposed to grievances over existing work arrangements.
27. The system would no longer require disputes to be created in order to have claims for minimum standards determined.
28. There would be a rationalisation and harmonisation of federal and state industrial relations arrangements on acceptable terms that eliminates or at least minimises regulatory content and duplication.
29. Rights against capricious termination of employment would be maintained but in a system with lower cost and speedier resolution of disputed terminations. Employers would have more confidence to engage and dismiss on performance and suitability grounds. Both employers and employees would be more familiar with their rights and responsibilities.
30. Commercially responsible steps taken by individual employers and governments to protect entitlements in the event of insolvency would further minimise the incidence of unpaid entitlements, whilst employees and the community would have a greater appreciation of the inherent risks to investment, jobs and entitlements of businesses insolvency.