

- Recognising the representative and service role of unions and employer bodies on behalf of member employees and employers
- Closing loopholes to better protect voluntary unionism and genuine freedom in agreement making
- Limiting the 'right to strike'
- Banning compulsory union bargaining fees
- Promoting choices and outcomes in agreement making
- Allowing 'opt out' rights for best practice workplaces
- A single federal minimum wage targeted at the low paid
- Maintaining youth wages
- Supportive wage structures for workers with disabilities
- Higher wages and conditions through higher productivity
- Work and family balance through flexibility and choice
- Easing the burden of unfair dismissal laws on employers, including small business
- Minimising employer costs of termination and redundancy
- Supporting private entrepreneurship and contracting
- Encouraging performance pay and employee share ownership
- Restricting the growth of discrimination and related laws
- Retaining the existing safety net scheme for unpaid employee entitlements on insolvency
- Preventing compulsory increases in employer superannuation levies
- Reducing employment on-costs
- Option for term appointments for new Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) commissioners
- Making industrial tribunals less adversarial and more inquiry oriented
- Recognising both the AIRC and other forms of dispute resolution
- Providing for more voluntary, rather than compulsory, mediation, conciliation and arbitration
- Speedier enforcement to prevent unlawful conduct
- Giving the policy intention of the law more weight in court interpretation
- Examining less costly mechanisms to recover monies owed to employees
- Maintaining consultation with employer and employee representatives on government workplace policy or laws
- Australian government participation in the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation

#### LIKE TO FIND OUT MORE?

The full ACCI Blueprint *Modern Workplace: Modern Future* is available on the ACCI web site [www.acci.asn.au](http://www.acci.asn.au).

It is time to debate how Australian workplaces can create more jobs and a better future. ACCI has developed the Blueprint as a vehicle for community debate, not just for governments, politicians, employer bodies or trade unions. Your views are welcome.



24 Brisbane Avenue  
BARTON ACT 2600  
PO Box E14  
KINGSTON ACT 2604  
Ph: 02 6273 2311  
Fax: 02 6273 3286  
Email: [acci@acci-asn.au](mailto:acci@acci-asn.au)

55 Exhibition Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000  
PO Box 18008  
Collins Street East  
MELBOURNE VIC 8003  
Ph: 03 9668 9950  
Fax: 03 9668 9958  
Email: [melb@acci.asn.au](mailto:melb@acci.asn.au)

M O D E R N W O R K P L A C E

[www.acci.asn.au](http://www.acci.asn.au)

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AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

# Modern Workplace: Modern Future

A Blueprint for the Australian Workplace Relations System

## 2002-2010

### S U M M A R Y

LEADING AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS

Workplace relations means employers, employees and their representatives working together in workplaces to create more jobs and increase our living standards.

This is no simple task in a tough global economy and a diverse labour market.

Modern workplaces must be supported by an up-to-date workplace relations system if we are to make the most of our future opportunities.

Australian industry and the millions of Australian employees have the major role to play in this task. They have shared interests in making businesses stronger, keeping jobs secure, creating new jobs, and in improving wages, conditions and living standards through productivity and efficiency.

Employers and employees also expect governments, politicians and industrial tribunals to play their part through improving the laws that govern rights and responsibilities in the workplace.

Business organisations, through the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), have developed a policy Blueprint *Modern Workplace: Modern Future* for improving the Australian workplace relations system over the next decade.

The ACCI Blueprint sets out key objectives, and proposes changes to work practices and industrial laws.

The Blueprint is one contribution employers are making to help Australia develop one of the best labour markets and workplace relations systems in the modern world. That is the route to more jobs, higher living standards and a better future.

## WORKPLACE REFORM – SO FAR

Australia started to reform laws and attitudes to workplace relations in 1993 and 1996, firstly under a Labor government and then under a Coalition government.

Many of the proposals in the ACCI Blueprint *Modern Workplace: Modern Future* build on these foundations.

We now know that the reforms of the past decade have produced beneficial results for Australian employers and employees:

- Lower Inflation
- Higher Productivity
- Higher Real Wages
- Lower Interest Rates
- Dramatically Fewer Strikes (down to their lowest level ever)
- More Australians In Jobs Than Ever Before
- Lower Unemployment

These outcomes make our living standards what they are today.

By continuing to develop stronger workplaces and better workplace relations, Australian employers, employees, trade unions and employer associations can do their part to deliver even better outcomes during the first decade of this new century, and beyond.

## ACCI BLUEPRINT OBJECTIVES

- Co-operation, not conflict
- Employers and employees empowered to work together
- Workplace decisions based on shared interests
- Prosperous businesses
- More jobs
- Better incomes
- Higher living standards
- Greater employment security
- Lower unemployment

## HOW THE ACCI BLUEPRINT GETS US THERE

- Higher productivity
- More workplace agreements
- Costs of employment better linked to workplace circumstances
- Flexible employment conditions
- Business confidence to employ new staff
- Choices for employers and employees – both as groups and as individuals
- Less employment regulation
- Quick settlement of disagreements

## WHAT THE ACCI BLUEPRINT PROPOSES

- Allowing most decisions about work to be made in the workplace
- An *Employment Regulation Standard* to prevent the build-up of new laws and improve the quality of employment law
- Considering harmonising commonwealth and state industrial systems
- Considering bringing state industrial tribunals within the framework of a harmonised system
- Less regulation by governments and parliaments
- Incorporating pro-employment objectives into industrial regulation
- Supporting small businesses and non-unionised employees to fully participate in the system.
- Less red-tape when making workplace agreements
- Over time, a single approving authority for workplace agreements
- A federal Workplace Agreements Act
- A federal Minimum Conditions Act
- Simplifying award regulation by industrial tribunals
- Ending the system of unions making extreme claims on employers to access industrial tribunals