



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

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ALP SHOULD RESIST ADOPTION OF ACTU CONGRESS INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS WISH-LIST

Statement by Mr Peter Hendy, Chief Executive

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Australia's largest and most representative business organisation, has called on the federal ALP to resist adopting the industrial relations blueprint being presented by the ACTU at its Congress which commences today.

The ACTU industrial relations blueprint is an old union wish list, dressed up for this latest union Congress. It is not a blueprint for continued jobs and prosperity.

The union plan for 'good faith' bargaining, reported today in the media, is simply a euphemism for compulsory collective bargaining and compulsory arbitration of union demands for collective agreements announced last month. This policy together with the abolition of individual bargaining would give union officials extreme powers over workplaces and deny workplace choice.

These approaches are critiqued by ACCI in the October edition of the monthly *ACCI Review*, in an article titled '*Compulsory Collective Bargaining – A Dangerous Rollback if ALP Adopts ACTU Policy*'.

This article shows how a compulsory good faith bargaining policy would force increases in labour costs, stunt productivity and cost jobs.

Instead of giving the union agenda a tick, the federal ALP should look to new and progressive thinking which serves both economic and social objectives and which involves input from industry and small business.

For example, the ACCI ten year Blueprint, *Modern Workplace: Modern Future* was developed in a grass roots way by business and employer groups, and represents a forward looking agenda for industrial relations reform over this decade.

The *ACCI Review* concludes that if the union blueprint is adopted by the federal ALP it will be a serious move in the wrong direction and will be opposed by business.

Labor should not tear up WorkChoices. It should accept its policy principles and improve on them. Having achieved an unemployment rate with a '4' in front of it – unthinkable a few years ago – the last thing we should do is tear up the workplace laws that help make this prosperity possible.

The October ACCI Review also includes articles on business concerns about information sharing for national security purposes and on the Australia - India relationship. The Review and the ACCI industrial relations Blueprint are available at www.acci.asn.au.

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