



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 22 September 2006

CHANGES TO WORKCHOICES REGULATIONS

Statement by Mr Peter Hendy, Chief Executive

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Australia's largest and most representative business organisation, has called on the Australian Government to go further in fixing technical problems with the WorkChoices legislation, than the announcements made today.

It is welcome that the government is showing a willingness to fix technical or minor policy issues with WorkChoices. This is what we would expect with a major piece of important reform legislation.

Whilst most of the government announcements are supported, they are minor, and either defer a problem, partially fix it or ignore others.

We would not support the prohibition on sanctioning an employee for breaching their personal leave obligations if it prevented legitimate management action against unauthorised absenteeism.

The changes announced do not rectify the bulk of technical and policy issues raised by ACCI and employer organisations over the past six months. For example (amongst others):

- The hours record keeping obligation is deferred, not fixed;
- The (new) obligation to pay penalty rates on personal leave (not apparently intended by the government) is not fixed for newly accrued personal leave;
- The (new) obligation to pay regular overtime on annual leave (not apparently intended by the government) is not fixed;
- The ability to agree in advance what are 'reasonable hours' above 38 is not fixed; and
- The interaction between the minimum wage and hours obligations for commission-only employment is not fixed.

Industry believes that WorkChoices is a vital reform for Australia's economic future.

ACCI will continue to pursue these issues with government.

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MR 97/06

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