



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

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DANGEROUS AWARD REACH IN 'CATCH-ALL' AWARD

Statement by Mr Peter Anderson, Chief Executive

A proposed 'catch-all' industrial award released today by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission will create uncertainty, and is likely to have unintended consequences that present a headache for industry and be at odds with government policy.

In particular, it risks extending the reach of the award system into higher income, managerial and professional work that was never intended to be covered by modern awards under the government's new IR laws.

Industry will assess the miscellaneous 'catch-all' award against two criteria – the government's pre-election promise that high income earners would not be covered by awards, and the government's award modernisation directive that awards would not cover work classifications not traditionally regulated by IR awards.

The AIRC Full Bench has today said that *"it is unclear which employees will be covered by this award. It may be that it will have application in some areas of the workforce which have not been covered by awards before."*

This statement is a cause of significant concern to industry. Regulation should not be made unless it is clearly known who is to be regulated, why, and how.

Award coverage and award conditions like overtime rates, penalty payments for work beyond certain hours, and annual leave loadings do not form part of the salary arrangements that exist in the managerial, professional or higher income private sector labour force. Coverage of these employees by awards serves no useful purpose, and would also limit flexibility promised by the government under the National Employment Standards.

After consulting industry, ACCI will make further submissions to the AIRC Full Bench seeking amendment to the terms of this miscellaneous award, and limits on its coverage.

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