



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Opinion Piece by ACCI Chief Executive Peter Hendy for the Sydney Morning Herald –
“Historic changes Will Benefit Employers and Employees” - 27 March 2006

Historic Changes Will Benefit Employers and Employees

By Peter Hendy - Chief Executive, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

The chamber welcomes the start today of *WorkChoices* as day one of a historic step for Australia.

While there will undoubtedly be some teething problems, as there is with any major policy change, we believe that *WorkChoices* will kick start another round of productivity growth and are confident that Australia will experience lower unemployment and stronger real wage growth than would otherwise have been the case.

In a major paper last year the chamber highlighted no less than 84 studies confirming the economic and employment benefits of workplace relations reform.

For the first time the overwhelming majority of Australian employers and employees will gain access to a truly national system of employment regulation. They will no longer be swapping backwards and forwards through a complicated web of industrial obligations that evolved over the 20th century, based on a 100-year-old arbitration system.

More and more people want greater control over their workplace hours and conditions and realise these flexibilities are best negotiated at the workplace level. This new system will help make this a reality.

WorkChoices will further the shift away from the centralised setting of wages and conditions to a system based on genuine enterprise bargaining at the workplace level, backed up with enforceable fair pay and conditions standards.

A single, more straightforward system will be a considerable gain, not only for employer compliance but for employees to determine and enforce their entitlements