

Head Office:

Unit 3, 28 Eyre Street, Kingston ACT 2604
PO Box 4239, Kingston ACT 2604
Ph: +61 2 6232 6533
Fax: +61 2 6232 6610
email: fedsec@anf.org.au
website: www.anf.org.au
ABN: 41-816-898-298

AUSTRALIAN NURSING FEDERATION

Publishers of the Australian Nursing Journal and the
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Industrial Services & Journals:
Industrial Services & ANF Journals
Level 2, 21 Victoria Street, Melbourne Vic 3000
Ph: +61 3 9639 5211
Fax: +61 3 9652 0567
email: anj@anf.org.au
industrial@anf.org.au

23 August 2000

Mr John Carter,
Secretary,
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations,
Small Business and Education Legislation Committee
S1.61 Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Carter

Re: Four Bills to amend the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*

The Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) is totally opposed to the proposed amendments to the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* contained in the following four Bills:

- Workplace Relations Amendment (Australian Workplace Agreements Procedures) Bill 2000
- Workplace Relations Amendment (Secret Ballots for Protected Action) Bill 2000
- Workplace Relations Amendment (Tallies and Picnic Days) Bill 2000
- Workplace Relations Amendment (Termination of Employment) Bill 2000

Workplace Relations Amendment (Australian Workplace Agreements Procedures Bill) 2000

This Bill repeats amendments proposed in the "More Jobs Better Pay" Bill 1999 and I refer the Committee to the submission made by the ANF to the Senate Inquiry established in relation to that Bill. A copy of the ANF submission is attached. The history and importance of the established career structure and nationally consistent wages and conditions for nurses is referred to on pages 3 and 4 of the submission and further comments relating to AWAs are made on page 14 under the heading titled "Employment Advocate".

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Workplace Relations Amendment (Secret Ballots for Protected Action) Bill 2000

The ANF believes there is no justification for making the process for taking industrial action even more restrictive. For further comments in relation to this issue please refer page 8 of the attached submission.

Workplace Relations Amendment (Tallies and Picnic Days) Bill 2000

The ANF believes that the question of Tallies is a matter which should be dealt with by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. This is the appropriate forum for the matter to be properly heard and determined and this process should be allowed to take place.

The issue of Union Picnic Days in awards has been dealt with by the AIRC in the Public Holidays Test Case decision which made provision for a picnic day. Whether or not an award should contain such a provision is a matter between the parties to the Award and the Commission.

The ANF is strongly opposed to any reduction in the number of public holidays available to working people. Employers already have the opportunity to make application to the Commission to amend existing public holiday clauses in awards should they desire to do so.

Picnic day in the Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory is a matter of government regulation and also reflected in the various nursing awards. It has been a long standing tradition that Picnic Day in the NT is celebrated as the Darwin Cup Day.

Workplace Relations Amendment (Termination of Employment) Bill 2000

The effect of this Bill is to further limit a worker's right to a "fair go" in cases of unfair dismissal. The ANF's comments in relation to this matter are contained on page 9 of the attached submission.

In conclusion, and for the reasons stated above, the ANF urges the Committee to reject the above four Bills in their entirety.

We are willing to speak to this submission and are available to attend the public hearing to be held on the 31st August 2000 should that be necessary.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Blake
Federal Industrial Officer.