

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
Legislation Committee

Inquiry into the Workplace Relations Amendment (WorkChoices) Bill 2005

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Submitter: Mr David Purnell
Clerk

Organisation: The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Canberra

Address: PO Box 6063
O'CONNOR ACT 2602

Phone: 02 6259 5078

Fax:

Email:

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) in CANBERRA

P.O. Box 6063, O'Connor ACT 2602

Tel 02 6259 5078

9 November, 2005

Secretary

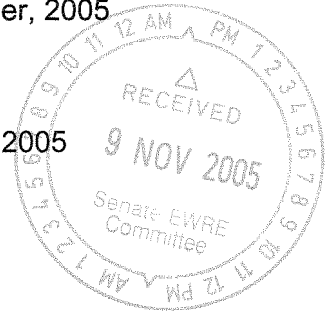
Inquiry into the Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Bill 2005

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee

Department of the Senate

Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Secretary,

On behalf of the Canberra Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) I write to you in keeping with hundreds of years of supporting working people around the world. Australia's proud traditions of including the 'Aussie battler' in government decisions and the accessibility of the Australian dream for all working Australians are being rejected by this government.

The proposed legislation's title 'Work Choices' refers only to the options of management. It actually limits the choices of many working Australians to either accept the offer made by management or to seek employment elsewhere. Many workers will likely lose conditions like weekend, shift and public holiday rates, overtime, redundancy pay, allowances, and loadings. This loss in pay would not be compensated by an increase in base salary.

The Australian Government is also preventing workers from having the option of fair representation in workplace relations by keeping unions out of workplaces and reducing the capacity for workers to bargain collectively with their employer. Once again this government is preferencing the financially secure sector of the Australian population. This attitude and associated policies, such as the proposed legislation, have the strong potential to divide Australia not only along socio-economic lines, but also along racial lines as second generation migrant Australians attempt to fulfill their own Australian dreams.

It is clear that this government neither respects nor trusts the people of Australia. It has prevented us and our elected representatives from fully considering this proposed legislation. If the legislation is as fair for Australians as the government says, then surely it would welcome robust debate on the issues.

Stripping the powers of the independent Industrial Relations Commission also reinforces the government's refusal to work *with* the Australian people, preferring to dictate *to* them. If the government's proposed legislation is so fair and equitable, then what could it possibly fear from the work of the Industrial Relations Commission?

The face of Australia is ever evolving, however these changes forced upon the people by the government will not increase our nation's social equality, improve our economic sustainability and development, and will fail to support our resilience as a unified nation.

Sincerely

David Purnell
Clerk