

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
Legislation Committee

Inquiry into the Workplace Relations Amendment (WorkChoices) Bill 2005

Submission no: 92

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Submitter: Ms Lisa Clancy
Secretary

Organisation: Taree Branch of the ALP

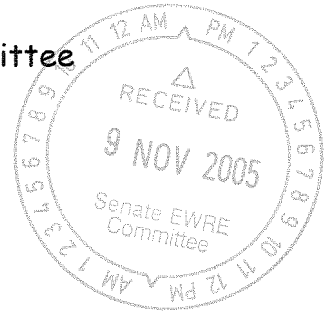
Address:

Phone:

Fax:

Email: Lisa_clancy@yahoo.com.au

Secretary
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations & Education Committee
Department of the Senate
Parliament House
Canberra 2600



Motion for referral

That:

1. Upon the introduction of the Workplace Relations Amendment (WorkChoices) Bill 2005 in the House of Representatives, the provision of the bill be referred to the Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 22 November 2005.
2. The inquiry not consider those elements of the bill which reflect government bills previously referred to, examined and reported on by the committee; namely those elements which relate to secret ballots, suspension/termination of a bargaining period; pattern bargaining; cooling off periods; remedies for unprotected industrial action; removal of section 166A of the Workplace Relations Act 1996 (the WR Act); strike pay; reform of unfair dismissal arrangements; right of entry; award simplification; freedom of association; amendments to section 299 of the WR Act; and civil penalties for officers of organisations regarding breaches.

After consultation with members, work colleagues and the general public Taree Branch of the Australian Labor Party Executive Committee found that there were significant worries re the changing of the Act.

1. Loss of Power - tilting of balance radically in favour of employer making this an uneven relationship. Some small groups of highly skilled workers, in areas of shortage of labour, may be better off, however we fell the majority of works, the unskilled, low skilled, unemployed, those of non English Speaking background, those lacking educational skills will be at a major disadvantage in negotiations with employers, they will not be in a position to protect their present entitlements especially w.r.t, penalty rates,

- collective bargaining, annual leave, parental care, personal/ carers leave.
2. Social Capital - the change to a 52 week average for hours worked, loss of weekend penalties will adversely impact on family life, social/ community involvement, voluntary groups, sporting activities. This will be the end of weekend BBQ's, family and friends and a huge down turn in the economic growth in rural and regional Australia creating more unemployment who are already struggling at unacceptable high levels. Minimum wage freeze on already struggling families again will have a direct impact on the social and economic growth of rural and regional Australia.

 3. Unfair Dismissal - loss of workers sense of security in regional areas - lack of employment opportunities - discrimination, harassment - fear - cost - the right of a fair go that Australians pride themselves on - nobody will have job security, the very fact that an employer can restructure the job description, therefore legally being able to dismiss the employee, no employee being entitled to redundancy, that only permanent, long term or casual (regular) are counted in the 100 or less employees, lack of a non government employed independent umpire.

Lisa Clancy
Secretary
Taree Branch of the ALP
PO Box 658
Taree 2430
Phone 0408 517 382