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# Herald Sun

## NATIONAL

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### Hold on a minute, read the IR fine print

Gerard McManus  
20dec05

TREASURER Peter Costello concedes the Government's workplace relations overhaul will cause short-term pain, but promises it will also bring long-term gain.

Mr Costello was responding to the revelation of a secret Treasury minute in October that advised him the changes could initially harm rather than help productivity, may result in lower wages for up to 1.6 million low-skilled workers, and may not create many new jobs.

Mr Costello told Parliament last month that no Treasury "report" had told him of possible bad consequences from the Government's changes.

Mr Costello posted the full Treasury minute on his website yesterday and urged people to read the entire document.

"I urge people to read them, and read it very, very carefully," Mr Costello said. "Far from suggesting that IR changes will be bad for the economy, it suggests that they will be good."

But Labor's Treasury spokesman Wayne Swan said the Treasury had "let the cat out of the bag", and said Mr Costello was avoiding telling the truth by splitting hairs on what constituted advice from his department.

"The Government's extreme industrial relations changes are all about cutting wages," he said.

"And what we now know is that the Treasurer misled the Parliament and the Prime Minister has misled the Australian people."

Even after Treasury suddenly made public the October 6 minute yesterday, it had to set the record straight about a

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Land estates	Opposition Leader Kim Beazley declared Mr Costello unfit to be Treasurer.
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Herald Sun Shop	Excerpts of the memo, seen under Freedom of Information laws, included Treasury advice that the changes may cut productivity as businesses put on less efficient workers in more numbers.
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