

[[Previous](#)] [[Major News - ACTU Mentions](#)]

Friday 21 July 2006



No more IR change, minister pledges

Author: Brad Norington

Publication: The Australian (002,Fri 21 Jul 2006)

Edition: 1 - All-round Country

Keywords: **ACTU (1),Greg (1),Combet (1)**

THE Howard Government has again been forced to declare it has no agenda for more industrial relations changes, following pressure from Australia's biggest employer group for significant further cuts to minimum working conditions.

A leaked document from the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry calls on the Government to abandon the standard 38-hour working week and cut leave entitlements for shiftworkers.

Under the proposal, employees would also be stood down whenever there was no work and casual workers would be given no time to consider employment contracts.

ACCI chief executive Peter Hendy confirmed yesterday the proposals contained in the draft document were discussed with Workplace Relations Minister Kevin Andrews at a meeting in Melbourne on July 12.

Mr Hendy said extra changes sought by some employers in a separate document -- including allowing all leave to be cashed out and cutting sick leave from 10 to five days -- were not raised with the minister.

Acting Workplace Relations Minister Philip Ruddock said John Howard had made it clear the Government did not intend further changes to workplace laws introduced in March.

Mr Ruddock said that the Government would not rule out addressing "a flaw in drafting" or "a technical matter" that emerged, but it did not plan to redraw the changes. "We will not be about fundamentally changing the arrangements we've put in place," he said.

The Government first fended off claims it wanted further reform a year ago, when Treasurer Peter Costello said that unfair dismissal laws should eventually be abolished for all employees, not just for firms with fewer than 100 staff.

The Government was on the defensive a second time, in March this year, when Finance Minister Nick Minchin told an HR Nicholls Society conference

that the Government needed a mandate at the next election for ``another wave of industrial relations reform''.

``This is evolution, not revolution, and there is still a long way to go,'' Senator Minchin said in a taped speech.

Opposition Leader Kim Beazley accused the Government yesterday of planning ``the next assault'' on workplace laws with employers, but said Labor would stop it.

``John Howard is not finished with the Australian people yet,'' Mr Beazley said.

Mr Hendy said Mr Andrews had not agreed to his requests. ``I think it's fair to say we got a negative response,'' he said.

ACTU secretary **Greg Combet** said the documents showed secret discussions were under way between the Government and big business to further attack basic rights for workers.

Headline: No more IR change, minister pledges

Author: Brad Norington

Edition: 1 - All-round Country

Section: Local

[[Previous](#)] [[Major News - ACTU Mentions](#)]

Copyright © News Ltd