

THE SENATOR'S INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS NEWSLETTER

A Message from the Democrats IR Spokesperson

As the Federal election draws closer voters have one major question to ask themselves—do we want WorkChoices to go or to stay?

The Democrats want it to go. But how to avoid throwing the baby out with the bath water?

The Australian Democrats' *IR Circuit-breaker—A Single System* is a plan which we know balances the demands of competing Interests.

We Democrats had enough common ground to be able to negotiate the 1996 Workplace Relations Act, swinging the Coalition back from the right to the centre.

We have enough common ground with Labor to negotiate a similar workable compromise.

No other political party has. Not one.

The Democrats have the crucial circuit-breaker needed in the divisive IR debate. If you want WorkChoices to go, and if you want to avoid Senate gridlock, the Democrats IR plan is the one that works.

The Democrats oppose WorkChoices and its complex confusing regime. We not only have a plan to replace it, but our plan will deliver a negotiated outcome in the Senate. That's what you want, isn't it?

The I.R. Circuitbreaker A Single System

Australia needs a genuine single national unitary system agreed to with state governments, comprising four essential features :

- One single national Industrial Relations Commission
- One single national Workplace Regulator
- A genuine safety net for all
- A genuine flexible bargaining system

“WorkChoices is profoundly unfair, unaustralian and unwise. It's time to step away from systems which punish the poor or are based on some sort of class warfare.”

These were my comments when the WorkChoices Bill was passed through the Senate in 2006. The Australian Democrats opposed the WorkChoices Legislation but supported the 1996 Workplace Relations Act.



Sept/Oct 2007

Senator Andrew Murray

Senator for Western Australia
51 Ord Street West Perth WA 6005
P: 08 9481 1455 F: 08 9481 1679

www.andrewmurray.org.au



DETAILS OF THE AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS IR - A SINGLE SYSTEM PLAN

No matter which party wins the Federal Election, I believe that WorkChoices is unfair and has to go. Australia must have a workable system. At the heart of our single, unitary system is justice, flexibility, efficiency, fairness and balance.

1. **Industrial Relations Commission** - a single, national strong, independent, national, pre-eminent industrial relations tribunal that is appointed on merit and :
 - Exercises judicial power to determine awards, set minimum wages, approve agreements and resolve disputes
 - Absorbs the state industrial relations commissions
 - Absorbs the federal Workplace Authority and Fair Pay Commission functions
2. **Workplace Regulator** - a single, national, strong, independent workplace regulator that :
 - Absorbs the regulatory functions of the state departmental inspectorates
 - Absorbs the regulatory functions of the Office of Workplace Services, the Employment Ombudsman and the Australian Building and Construction Commission
 - Ends federal ministerial discretionary and interventionist regulatory powers
3. **Genuine Safety Net** - underpinned by the minimum wage, minimum conditions and awards that has :
 - Fair and balanced minimum wage determinations made annually, taking into account living standards, skills, training, disabilities, anti-discrimination provisions, pay equity and relevant tax and government transfer payments.
 - At least 8 minimum conditions for all workers, whether on statutory or common law agreement. The 8 minimum conditions should be—minimum wage, annual leave, parental leave, personal leave, hours of work, carers and compassionate leave, public holidays, and termination of employment and redundancy.
 - National and industry based, simplified awards with up to 16 allowable matters.
4. **Genuine flexible bargaining system** that
 - Enshrines enterprise bargaining
 - Makes a mix of industrial instruments available—union and non-union; collective and individual agreements; statutory and common-law
 - Enshrines the right to collectively bargain, genuinely and in good faith
 - Abolishes WorkChoices AWAs, replacing them with statutory individual agreements with a global no-disadvantage test, referenced back to the relevant award.

Additional information

Please refer to my website : www.andrewmurray.org.au for further information, or ring my Electorate office on 08 9481 1455 for any other information on my portfolios or other Democrats' policies or issues.

AUSTRALIAN
DEMOCRATSTM
www.democrats.org.au

Authorised by Senator A Murray 51 Ord Street West Perth WA 6005 and printed by Abbott & Company
21 Glassford Road, Kewdale