

Refresh Australia!

Add values to build prosperity



Refresh Industrial Relations
Ensure balance in work/life choices

$$$$$ + \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{Renewable} \\ \text{energy} \end{array} \right\} + \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{Indigenous:} \\ \text{genuine} \\ \text{partnerships} \end{array} \right\} + \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{Work/life} \\ \text{balance} \end{array} \right\} = \text{Refreshed Australia}$$

BRIEF NOTES ON THE ISSUE

Consequently, if the whole structure and organisation of an economic system is such as to compromise human dignity, to lessen a man's sense of responsibility or rob him of opportunity for exercising personal initiative, then such a system, we maintain, is altogether unjust – no matter how much wealth it produces, or how justly and equitably such wealth is distributed.

Pope John XXIII, *Christianity and Social Progress*, 1961, #83

Since the introduction of the WorkChoices legislation in March 2006 the changes wrought by government to the industrial relations landscape in Australia have been profound. These changes have begun to adversely alter the work/life balance of many Australian workers and families. Broken shifts, long or insufficient hours and being beholden to AWAs developed by employers who maintain a 'flexible' workforce without due regard for the need for family and community time are contributing factors to the breakdown of social norms. Where families who once prayed together stayed together, in these days of casualised labour and more shift work, families and communities, including faith communities, struggle to find enough quality, common time to share with each other. As a nation we run the risk of so seriously and negatively impacting upon family and community life for the benefit of the economy and an ideology of individualism that we risk even greater social problems in the future.

Although ... democratic societies accept today the principle of labour union rights, they are not always open to their exercise. The important role of union organisations must be admitted: their object is the representation of the various categories of workers, their lawful collaboration in the economic advance of society, and the development of the sense of their responsibility for the realisation of the common good.

Pope Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens*, 1971, #14

The changes have also created greater imbalance in the power relationships in the workplace. The role of unions in the workplace has been systematically curtailed with severe penalties for any active union presence in a workplace. This applies to individual union officials, unions and even for employers who would prefer to work proactively with unions in their business.^[1] While employers are actively encouraged to 'collectively bargain', workers are actively discouraged from doing so in the present system.

So let's work together in lobbying to refresh Australia's industrial relations policies to ensure fairness and work/life balance.

^[1] This relates to Right of Entry provisions and the regulations regarding prohibited content in awards and agreements. For example: a union notice board in a workplace may constitute a breach with a \$33,000 fine.

ACTIONS to Refresh Industrial Relations policy

- Join the ACTU campaign to petition for a better deal and fairness for workers and families -- www.rightsatwork.com.au/
- Wear something orange on Fridays and get *Orange Fridays* going in your workplace. Have the conversation with others to let people know it's in support of rights for workers and work/life balance. Spread the word to start the movement.
- Join WorkLife in SE Queensland or other local community organisations campaigning for Just Work -- www.worklife.org.au/
- Lobby Julia Gillard and/or Joe Hockey re a fair IR system that ensures proper work/life balance, rights for workers and the role of unions (sample letter and addresses below to attach to the campaign card).

Ms Julia Gillard MP
Federal Member for Lalor
PO Locked Bag 14
Werribee Vic 3030

Julia.Gillard.MP@aph.gov.au

The Hon Joe Hockey MP
Federal Member for North Sydney
PO Box 1107
North Sydney NSW 2059

J.Hockey.MP@aph.gov.au

Dear ...

I am very concerned that we have lost important rights at work fought for and enjoyed by older generations and that the balance has swung too far in favour of employers and profits above all else. I want to see policies and regulatory bodies that protect all workers from being unjustly sacked and the rights of workers and unions to organise and collectively bargain for decent wages and conditions in their workplaces reinstated. I am gravely concerned about the impacts of current policies on family and community time and wish to see policies that ensure decent work/life balance.

Yours sincerely

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Be better informed -- acting on new knowledge goes a long way ...

Knowledge, deliberation and discernment shift opinion and attitudes

For a succinct overview of all parties' policies check out the 'report card' developed by Polmin entitled *Just Work - how the political parties currently view Australian workplaces*: www.sao.clriq.org.au/refresh_australia/just_work_and_political_parties.pdf

For more information go to ...

- www.sao.clriq.org.au/refresh_australia/
- www.rightsatwork.com.au/
- www.worklife.org.au/
- www.polmin.com.au/