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Stirling Small Business Centre, 45 Delawney Street, BALCATTA

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SMALL BUSINESS.PDF (SOURCE: *master builder*, Journal, Vol.5 No.5, November-December 2008)



Private schools trump State in vocational training

Fresh questions have been raised about standards in State schools, with new figures revealing private schools are twice as successful at vocational training, an area of education which has traditionally been a strong point of the public system.

The analysis of 2008 Year 12 results, released yesterday by the Curriculum Council, Aw showed that State schools' performance in the TEE had slipped compared with previous years. Two-thirds of the top 50 schools rated as the best at helping their students attain vocational education and training qualifications last year were independent and Catholic schools.

Just 18 State schools appeared in the top 50 compared with 32 private schools, even though there are more State schools overall Two years ago, State schools dominated the rankings with 32 in the top 50 compared with 18 private schools. Students who study VET certificates at school can get industry qualifications in um such as construction, business, aged care and information technology.

Those with higher-level vocational qualifications such as a Certificate IV can go straight into jobs after leaving school or, in some cases, university where they also could get exemptions for part of their university course. The table ranked schools based on the percentage of students who achieved a full vocational qualification in 2008. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The West Australian*, 9.1.09)

Businesses face insurance blow

WA businesses face increases in insurance premiums of up to 30 per cent this year as big insurers lift rates to recoup heavy losses on their sharemarket investments, insurance brokers have warned. Premiums could jump even further when sharp increases in global

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reinsurance rates stemming from storm payouts in the northern hemisphere last year flow through to local insurers. The global financial crisis fallout will also hit WA households, with increases of 5 per cent expected on most house and car insurance policies as they come up for renewal. . (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The West Australian*, 9.1.09)

Job fears put brakes on pay rises

FAIR Pay Commissioner Ian Harper has warned low-paid workers that the protection of jobs will be the guiding force in his final deliberations on the minimum wage. Despite rising inflation, the man charged with setting the minimum wage has confessed he is deeply concerned that any movement that is too aggressive could exacerbate unemployment.

And he has asked business, unions and the Rudd Government to provide him with the most up-to-date data on employment forecasts to assist the commission's deliberations amid volatile economic conditions. In an interview with *The Australian* [on 11.1.09], Professor Harper predicted the economic slowdown would make his 2009 decision the most difficult by far. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 12.1.09)

WA job ads plummet 23% in December

Western Australia has suffered the biggest fall in job advertisements in December as ads across the country slump to "recession-like" levels, a key employment measure has found. The state saw a 22.8 per cent slump in print media jobs ads in December, falling by 22.8 per cent, a level well above the national-average slump of 13.9 per cent, the ANZ Banking Group employment data showed.

Seasonally adjusted, employment positions advertised in newspapers and on the internet in Australia fell by 9.7 per cent last month, to a weekly average of 190,661, and by an annual rate of 29.9 per cent. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *WA Business News*, *Daily Business Alert*, 12.1.09)

PM told to hasten tax cuts

PROMISED tax cuts could be brought forward a year as the Rudd Government considers options for a second emergency package to counter the worsening global economy.

Wayne Swan said yesterday the Government was determined to do all it could to strengthen the economy in the face of the international crisis. "We are certainly all in this together - Australian families, businesses large and small and the Rudd Government - and we stand ready to take more decisive action should the international situation deteriorate further," the Treasurer said.

The Government is in the process of spending \$10.4 billion, with payments to pensioners, families and carers, and increasing the first-home buyers grant. However, it is coming under pressure from the International Monetary Fund to do more, and both the domestic and international outlooks have darkened since the first stimulus package was unveiled in October. The recession in the US is becoming increasingly severe, with 550,000 people losing their jobs last month, pushing the unemployment rate to a 16-year high of 7.2 per cent. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 13.1.09)

Rudd IR changes 'a threat to WA'

The Barnett Government has attacked key aspects of the Federal Government's sweeping industrial relations changes, warning they will damage WA industry as it tries to deal with the impact of the global economic crisis. In its submission to a Senate inquiry into Labor's proposed workplace regime, the State Government calls for 11 amendments to the Fair Work Bill, including changes to the enterprise bargaining and union right-of-entry provisions.

It wants to strip the new industrial umpire of proposed powers to impose workplace deals and prevent union officials from inspecting the pay and other records of non-member employees. "The WA Government is concerned that the bargaining, transfer of business, unfair dismissal and right-of-entry provisions of the Bill will negatively affect West Australian workplaces," the document submitted by Treasurer Troy Buswell says.

"It is critical in the current economic climate that workplace laws encourage flexibility, productivity and business confidence." The State Government calls for the Bill to be amended so the new body, Fair Work Australia, cannot arbitrate a workplace determination where bargaining fails or there has been a breach of the bargaining orders. "The WA Government considers that the capacity for Fair Work Australia to intervene in bargaining disputes and arbitrate outcomes may undermine the bargaining process. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The West Australian*, 13.1.09)

Unions demand greater rights

Unions have demanded greater entry rights to workplaces for their officials, permission for pattern bargaining and fewer limits on unfair dismissal claims in a range of changes they want made to the Rudd Government's proposed industrial relations laws. The ACTU has proposed more than 150 amendments to the Fair Work Bill in its submission to a Senate inquiry and accused Labor of breaking its election promises by not going far enough in its push to scrap the Howard government's WorkChoices package.

"There are several important flaws in the Government's proposed legislation where the Bill falls short of what Australians expected

when they voted to reject WorkChoices," ACTU secretary Jeff Lawrence said. "The most glaring broken election promise concerns the limit on what workers and employers can bargain about and include in a workplace agreement." (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The West Australian*, 14.1.09)

ACTU demands Gillard change laws

UNIONS have demanded a return of pattern bargaining under the Rudd Government's revamped workplace laws, warning that workers' wages and conditions are under threat. Accusing the Government of breaching an election pledge to deliver a fairer system, the ACTU has predicted in a submission to parliament that parents could find it harder to win flexible working arrangements than under Work Choices.

And they complain the Government has broken its election promise to allow "free bargaining" between workers and employers when striking workplace agreements, particularly on expanded unfair dismissal rights. The criticism of Workplace Relations Minister Julia Gillard's proposed industrial relations laws raises the prospect that some Labor MPs may lobby from within the party to toughen the laws to reflect union concerns before a final version is presented to the Senate.

Ms Gillard last night rejected any suggestion the proposed laws would allow pattern bargaining. "As promised, the Fair Work Bill retains the definition of pattern bargaining from the current Workplace Relations Act," a spokeswoman said. "Industrial action cannot be taken in support of pattern bargaining. We believe that means our new laws have got the balance right."

But employer group the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which will lodge its own 200-page submission on the new laws this week, warned the proposed changes would allow pattern bargaining. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 14.1.09)

New IR laws a risk in economic downturn

The government's Fair Work Bill poses a significant risk to business in the economic downturn and should be changed, a leading employer group says. Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive Peter Anderson says the bill, which replaces Work Choices, gives unions too much say.

In a submission to the Senate inquiry into the new law the chamber asks for amendments in 10 significant areas including bargaining rules, unfair dismissal laws, union right of entry and the ability of unions to bargain across multiple enterprises. Mr Anderson told AAP today ACCI wanted the government to return the original timetable of introducing the new law in January next year.

The government has decided to introduce the new good faith bargaining rules, the national employment standards and new unfair dismissal rules from July 1 this year with the rest next January. A Senate committee will consider the bill in a series of public hearings later this month before it reports to parliament on February 27. (SOURCE: *WA Business News*, *Daily Business Alert*, 15.1.09)

On our way to the bad old days

Gillard's workplace plan is a big win for union leaders.

ANYBODY who does not believe we have returned to the old era of union authority should pay attention to what ACTU secretary Jeff Lawrence is up to. As Samantha Maiden reported in *The Australian* yesterday, Mr Lawrence is angry over the Rudd Government's proposed workplace laws, saying that pattern bargaining, where unions negotiate deals that apply to an entire industry, is not allowed. He wants pattern bargaining back, so unions can protect workers' wages and conditions.

Back in the days when wages and conditions were imposed on employers and workers by lawyers, peak employer representatives and big union officials of the industrial relations club, this was called an ambit claim - an outrageous demand to distract attention from the real objective. In this case, Mr Lawrence's objective looks like being to stop people from understanding that Employment Minister Julia Gillard has already given the ACTU a great deal of what it wants, and he does not want anybody to realise this before the new workplace relations legislation goes through parliament.

It is a deception that will help Ms Gillard, who knows that ostensible union anger will help her bill in the Senate, where the Government is in the minority. Opposition Leader Malcolm Turnbull has already acknowledged that the Government has an election mandate to change John Howard's workplace laws, and union anger will make it easy not to fight Ms Gillard's bill too hard. After all, if the ACTU is upset by it, how bad can it be?

The answer is that it is very bad indeed. Ms Gillard wants to re-establish the foundation of the old industrial relations club, with a powerful quasi-court, to be called Fair Work Australia. It will have a role in setting minimum wages and resolving disputes. Unions will be empowered to get involved in negotiations in organisations where they have but one member. And in workplaces where they have none, union officials will have right of entry to inspect staff records, on the grounds that employees might want to become unionists in the future. (SOURCE/EXTRACT: *The Australian*, 15.1.09)



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