

Barnett backdown shows WorkChoices is electoral poison

Premier Colin Barnett's latest distancing of his Government from implementing WorkChoices-type changes to WA work laws is an admission that those policies are damaging for working people, as well as electoral poison.

After gaining Government in 2008, then then Minister for Commerce Troy Buswell commissioned a former WorkChoices architect, Steven Amendola, to review WA's work laws, an exercise that wasted over \$1million of taxpayers' money.

193 recommendations were made, including forcing workers onto individual contracts, stripping away the award safety net and removing unfair dismissal rights. However, two years later following an extensive union and community "No WorkChoices in WA" campaign, the State Government is still to announce what legislative change will actually take place.

At a media doorstep earlier today, Premier Colin Barnett sought to distance himself from implementing any WorkChoices-type changes to WA laws.

"This latest disavowal of WorkChoices by Colin Barnett is particularly interesting following Peter Reith's recent call for the Liberal Party to take up the industrial relations "fight", and push through employer-friendly laws," UnionsWA Secretary Simone McGurk said today.

"Apart from being disastrous for individual workers, recent research shows that WorkChoices laws did nothing to assist productivity growth, in fact while John Howard's work laws were in force productivity went backwards in Australia," Ms McGurk said.

"Colin Barnett is right to distance himself from WorkChoices-type laws. They are bad for working West Australians and unnecessary when WA work laws are working well. Considering almost 300,000 WA workers are still covered by these laws, you would have thought the Government would want to maintain a stable IR system, not embark on an ideological obsession at workers' expense."

"It's a disgrace that Steven Amendola, sitting in his Melbourne CBD office, is \$850,000 richer for this waste of time."

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