

29 March 2007

Setting the record straight on WorkChoices Comments

Statement by Heather Ridout
Chief Executive Australian Industry Group

It is important to clarify two comments which I made on Lateline Business last night.

I supported the release of statistics on agreement making, in the context of a discussion on the content of AWAs. My comments related to the fact that there is a legislative requirement (Section 844 Workplace Relations Act) for this analysis, to be prepared by the government by the end of June and tabled in Parliament soon thereafter. In previous years, this publication, known as Agreement Making in Australia, has included a detailed analysis of the content of AWAs.

In relation to productivity, I asserted that there had been a pickup in manufacturing and construction productivity in the year 05/06 compared with 04/05. This is factually correct. I further cautioned, however, that it was too early to attribute this improvement directly to WorkChoices but that it was very encouraging, which it is.

I was being totally intellectually honest in expressing this caution as these figures covered only the early months of WorkChoices. To attribute to me the view that WorkChoices will not result in higher productivity over time, is nonsense.

This sets the record straight.

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