

# Reduce the powers of the independent umpire to settle workplace disputes and set minimum work standards



**“ If the Government gets rid of the umpire, why would employers play by the rules?” ”**

## Important changes coming from 1 July 2005

*The Howard Government has said it will use its new Senate powers to take away many of your basic rights at work.*

*The Government wants to weaken the powers of the independent umpire in the workplace - the Industrial Relations Commission.*

For over 100 years Australia's state and federal Industrial Relations Commissions have acted as the independent umpire at work, settling industrial disputes and setting decent minimum standards enjoyed by all workers.

Industrial Relations Commissions have provided an independent forum where working people can take disputes with their employer if things go wrong. This has been the Australian way.

The Industrial Relations Commission is a unique Australian invention. It is one of the reasons why Australian workplaces are safer and fairer than those in other countries, like the USA. It has protected living standards and the Australian way of life.

The Howard Government wants, as far as possible, to get rid of all State Industrial Relations Commissions and to take powers away from the Australian Industrial Relations Commission.

The Government doesn't want the federal Commission to set minimum wages, to help fix industrial disputes, or to consider any new award conditions.

**Taking away the role of the independent umpire is a recipe for more disputes and lower workplace standards.**

### HOW THE HOWARD GOVERNMENT IS REDUCING THE POWERS OF THE INDEPENDENT UMPIRE

Before the Howard Govt was elected in 1996	POWERS OF THE UMPIRE UNDER THE HOWARD GOVERNMENT		Business wishlist...
	Current situation - since 1996	Expected govt changes - 2005	
<p>Industrial Relations Commission had power to settle workplace disputes.</p> <p>Commission decided what minimum wages and conditions should be in awards without government limits.</p>	<p>Australian Industrial Relations Commission's powers reduced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Minimum conditions in awards limited to matters set by government.</li> <li>- Government tries to pass new laws to overturn any Commission decisions it does not agree with.</li> <li>- Commission has less power to settle disputes.</li> </ul>	<p>Take away Australian Industrial Relations Commission's power to set minimum wages.</p> <p>Even more limits on what minimum conditions can be in awards.</p> <p>Any future decision of the Commission that the Howard Government doesn't like will be overruled by new laws.</p> <p>Abolish State Industrial Relations Commissions as far as possible.</p>	<p>Commission to have no power to set minimum conditions in awards.</p> <p>All minimum conditions (only 5 or 6) set by Government.</p> <p>Commission's power restricted to fining unions and workers if they breach the Govt's complex laws or take strikes.</p> <p>No State Industrial Relations Commissions.</p>