

CHANGING AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES FOR THE COVID RECOVERY

24 March 2021 | Insight
Legal Briefings

The Australian Government has made much of pledges to change the workplace to support post-Covid recovery. Can it deliver?

AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS REFORMS

In May 2020, the government announced its intention to introduce workplace changes to support the rebuilding of a post-Covid economy. Join our Employment, Industrial Relations and Safety team as we unpack the headlines and follow the latest developments on the IR reform.

In this series, we present a series of articles and videos designed to bring you quickly up to speed, in what is a significant and rapidly changing area of risk for Australian organisations.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

AUSTRALIAN EIRS PODCAST EP13: AUSTRALIAN IR REFORMS: OUR ANALYSIS OF THE WORKPLACE RELATIONS REFORM

14 December 2020

In this podcast briefing, our Employment and IR team reviewed some of the interesting aspects in the *Fair Work Amendment (Supporting Australia's Jobs and Economic Recovery) Bill 2020*, following its release last week.

We discuss the media reaction to date, the union demerger proposal, the impact of the changes to casual employees, criminal sanctions for underpayment, enterprise bargaining and other implications. The podcast was hosted by Partner [Anthony Longland](#) (Perth), with contributions from Partners [Natalie Gaspar](#) (Melbourne), [Drew Pearson](#) (Sydney) and Executive Counsel, [Wendy Fauvel](#) (Brisbane).

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THE ARRIVAL OF THE OMNIBUS

Anthony Longland, Partner

9 December 2020

Following a gestation of seven months, the Workplace Relations Reform: *Fair Work Amendment (Supporting Australia's Jobs and Economic Recovery) Bill 2020* has finally reached the Federal Parliament.

In the cold light of day, and relative to the size and scope of the matters considered by the working groups, it reveals small changes. It certainly doesn't present as a comprehensive response to a once in a century economic crisis.

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THE POST-COVID WORKPLACE: IR REFORM

Anthony Longland, Partner

17 November 2020

Announcements will shortly be made about changes to the Fair Work Act. They will have wide ranging impacts on all workplaces throughout Australia.

In May 2020 the Prime Minister described the reforms as necessary to enable the Australian economy to rebuild from the Covid-19 recession. Shortly thereafter the Treasurer said industrial relations reform was “the first cab off the rank” in the Government’s effort to stimulate job creation in the post Covid economy.

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AWARD SIMPLIFICATION - WE’D LIKE TO DO IT, BUT WE JUST CAN’T WORK OUT HOW

Anthony Wood, Partner and Shivchand Jhinku, Partner

20 November 2020

In our second article in the series, Anthony Wood and Shivchand Jhinku consider progress in relation to the process of award simplification through the government’s working group.

Assuming that the public commentary is correct, most informed observers will be unsurprised if this latest award simplification process fails to make widespread changes. After all, we have experienced award simplification and award modernisation in the past decades, but awards have continued to survive, largely intact.

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WHEN IS CASUAL PERMANENT? FINDING A WORKABLE DEFINITION

Drew Pearson, Partner and Wendy Fauvel,
Executive Counsel

24 November 2020

In our third article in the series, Drew Pearson and Wendy Fauvel discuss the casual employment relationship in the context of the government's Casual working group.

There are some difficulties with reaching a one-size-fits-all approach to the definition of casual employment that applies in Australian workplaces. We anticipate the new definition will attempt to strike a balance between the relationship that was agreed upon at the time of engagement and the one that evolves in practice.

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DECIPHERING THE COMPLEX WORLD OF UNDERPAYMENT OF WAGES: COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Mike Gonski, Partner and Rommo Pandit,
Senior Associate

1 December 2020

In our fifth article in the series, Michael Gonski and Rommo Pandit discuss the challenges faced by employers in complying with a complicated system of Australian employment laws.

Even where employers seek to 'do the right thing', but inadvertently fail to comply with their obligations and self-report non-compliance, there is no guarantee they will avoid prosecution. We are expecting changes that will assist employers to comply in the first place, as well as provide comfort that they will not be prosecuted where they remediate and self-disclose.

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GREENFIELDS AGREEMENTS - 'PROJECT LIFE AGREEMENTS'?

Nick Ogilvie, Partner and Alexis Agostino, Senior Associate

3 December 2020

In the latest article in our Workplace Change for the Covid Recovery series, Nicholas Ogilvie, Partner and Alexis Agostino, Senior Associate consider the introduction of 'Project Life Agreements' to the Fair Work Act, and other potential reforms to greenfields agreements, which are aimed at reassuring investors, and encouraging investment in Australian major projects.

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KEY CONTACTS

If you have any questions, or would like to know how this might affect your business, phone, or email these key contacts.



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