

Workchoices NSW

The O'Farrell Government has introduced Workchoices style laws into Parliament which will:

- end the independent role of the NSW Industrial Commission
- cut the pay and conditions of public sector workers in NSW,
- undermine the ability of public sector unions to represent their members, and
- cut services to the community

The O'Farrell Government's laws will give NSW public Sector workers the Worst Industrial Rights of any worker in Australia.

The system that O'Farrell wants to change

For more than 80 years, NSW public sector workers have been covered by agreements and awards that set out the wages and conditions of employment. When these agreements expire, unions representing the workforce and management representing the NSW Government negotiate a new agreement.

If unions and management do not agree the matter would go to the independent umpire - NSW Industrial Relations Commission and could be arbitrated. The Commission would listen to the arguments from management and unions and make a decision based on the evidence.

This system has been in place for 80 or so years and operates for most public sector workers in most Australian states.

O'Farrell's new system

Under the O'Farrell Government's new system, the Industrial Relations Commission is no longer independent and is bound to implement policies written by Barry O'Farrell.

The Commission is now compelled to listen to and enforce the arguments and only the arguments raised by management on behalf of the NSW Government.

The Government will soon introduce regulations to ensure that Commission will enforce a new Government wages policy which will effectively limit pay rises for new agreements to 2.5% when inflation is running at over 3%.

Cutting the pay and conditions of public sector workers will cause people to leave the service and will ultimately undermine services to our communities.

O'Farrell wants to cut your wages and conditions

Barry O'Farrell has told Parliament that this system is necessary because he wants to reduce the wages bill and cut the pay and conditions of NSW public sector workers.

Without an independent Commission to enforce our rights, **every single condition of employment for NSW public sector employees can be changed by regulation at any time.**

A recent study by academics at Sydney University found that public sector workers in NSW were paid at rates similar to public sector workers across Australia and not unlike equivalent private sector rates.

There is no Budget Reason to cut pay and conditions

In May 2011, the independent ratings agency Standard and Poor's reviewed the NSW budget and not only reaffirmed the State's AAA credit rating but also concluded the budget position of the NSW Government was very good.

This independent review proves there is no budget reason why this action was necessary by the O'Farrell Government. Instead the O'Farrell Government's action represents a deliberate attack on the rights of NSW public sector employees.

Politicians pay and conditions are set by an independent umpire

O'Farrell's laws will allow his Government to determine all the wages and conditions of thousands of public sector employees, including doctors nurses and allied health, fire-fighters, transport workers, teachers, scientists and community workers.

However, the wages and conditions of NSW politicians will be determined in line decisions of the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal. Unions support a strong role for an independent umpire. We believe that independent umpire should be there for the workforce as well as the politicians.

What can we do?

The legislation is likely to go through parliament because it now has the support of the Shooters Party and the Christian Democrats.

It's time for us to step up our campaign. Ask your work colleagues to sign the petition.

Join our mass action and let's show Barry 'Farrell what we think of his laws by joining all the public sector workers on the 15th June outside Parliament House in Macquarie Street.

For more information go to www.betterstate.com.au