



# Plain English guide to the key issues

## Workplace Relations Framework Inquiry

23 January 2015

The Australian Government has asked the Productivity Commission to look at possible improvements to Australia's workplace relations system. That system is a set of laws and organisations that regulate minimum wages, awards and penalty rates, unfair dismissal arrangements, and how employees and employers can bargain with each other at the enterprise or individual level. It also provides rights for unions, employees and employers.

The Commission has produced five detailed issues papers that pose many questions about the system (see [Workplace Relations Framework](#)), but these are long documents, which you may not have time to read.

This short paper sets out the main issues as they relate to you as an employee, employer or as a representative of these.

There are a number of ways you can send us your views:

- you might just want to post some comments directly on our website (see [send a brief comment](#))
- alternatively you can email or post us a submission.

We would like to emphasise that we do not expect long or professionally crafted submissions. Your submission might just be a few sentences or 'dot points' telling us about just one feature of the system that should be improved (or for that matter, a feature that seems to be working well), or it might be detailed and lengthy.

To find out how to make a submission see [how to make a submission](#).

## The questions and issues

What works well in the system?

Do you have any views about minimum wages, awards, penalty rates, unfair dismissal, bargaining, the compliance burdens of the system and the performance of the Fair Work Commission and the Fair Work Ombudsman?

Have any of these parts of the system assisted you, or on the other hand, created problems for you, and if so how?

What changes would you like to see to the workplace relations system, and why? (We'd also like you to put yourself in the shoes of someone else in the system, say an employer or employee, and think about how that might change your views about the best design of the system.)

How would you achieve the changes you might like to see?

How quickly could these changes be made – in the next few years or much later?

Can you see any downsides to your policy suggestions?

Most people are good employees and employers, but some are not. Taking account of your own recent experiences, please tell us your views about what you would require a workplace relations system to do about this.

Have existing workplace regulations ever stopped you from doing something you would reasonably like to do? For example, for a business, this might be hiring a new worker or deciding to become an employer in the first place. For an employee, it might be getting more flexible hours of work?

Who would you go to for help if you had a workplace issue or needed information about an issue? Are existing systems and organisations working acceptably? If not, what should be done about it?

How much ‘red tape’ is involved in complying with requirements? What could be done to reduce this, while maintaining a good workplace relations system?

### **Key inquiry dates**

Receipt of terms of reference	19 December 2014
Due date for submissions	13 March 2015
Release of draft report	June/July 2015
Draft report public hearings	August/September 2015
Final report to Government	30 November 2015

### **Submissions can be made**

By email: [workplace.relations@pc.gov.au](mailto:workplace.relations@pc.gov.au)

By post: Workplace Relations Inquiry  
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### **Contacts**

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