PAULINE HANSON’S ONE NATION

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

One Nation’s Industrial Relations policy is based on fairness and equality for all parties concerned, with emphasis on protection of employees and contractors entitlements while also protecting employers from dishonest, disruptive or unsuited employees, or abuse of power by unions or union officials.

The important role unions have played in Australia is recognised, and the continuing need for workers to have access to assistance to negotiate their wages and conditions is acknowledged; membership of unions will continue to be voluntary.

STATUS OF UNIONS AND ENTERPRISE BARGAINING

Enterprise based unions are supported and enterprise bargaining is encouraged.

One Nation is concerned that employees are adequately represented when enterprise bargaining, and that state and federal governments establish minimum levels of wages and fundamental work conditions to protect Australian workers from the pressure which can be applied by employers, particularly when low cost labour is available from recent immigrants from countries with lower living standards than our own.

COMPULSORY UNIONISM

Compulsory unionism is not supported – it leads to a diminished freedom of choice and association and encourages complacency on the part of union officials. Workers have a right to decide whether a union or an individual representative best meets their needs. Action will be taken to stop abuse of power by any union or union official. Workplace victimisation or preference on the grounds of a person’s union membership status will not be tolerated.

At present a percentage of some union fees is paid direct to the Labor Party. Options will be examined which can be used to prevent monies being channelled from union dues to a political party, unless prior authorisation is given by the union member.

AUSTRALIAN WORK PLACE AGREEMENTS

The benefits and advantages to both employee and employer which stem from work place agreements and certified agreements as they are currently intended to operate are recognised and acknowledged; however action will be taken to ensure award wages and conditions continue to under-pin all work place agreements.

All agreements should be written in plain English to ensure employees in particular are able to easily understand the intent of the agreement they are signing.

Allowable matters as defined and listed in the Workplace Relation’s Act will be reviewed. Cultural leave and other discriminatory forms of leave will be withdrawn from ‘allowable matters’. Special allowances or preference based on race will not be tolerated and will be excluded from all contracts and agreements.

Workers in many industries require the determination of a ‘spread of hours’, enabling relevant penalty rates to be prescribed outside of those hours. Although enterprise bargaining and workplace agreements should be
the main source of such determinations, the inclusion of a ‘spread of hours’, normally over a 12 hour period, is supported where appropriate.

**AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS COMMISSION**

Wage rises other than minimum wage levels should be a matter of negotiation between employers and employees at an enterprise level – this ensures both parties who know and can influence the profitability of an enterprise are the decision makers rather than having an arbitrary decision imposed which does not take account of local influences.

The role of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC), in particular its role in settling disputes and assessing minimum wage levels is agreed but One Nation proposes that the charter of the AIRC be expanded to include an obligation to encourage the pursuit of higher productivity, low inflation and the cessation of restrictive work practices.

Penalties for any breach of employee’s minimum wages and conditions under employment agreements or awards will be increased. Employers using low cost labour of recent immigrants from countries with lower living standard than our own will be targeted in particular.

**INDUSTRIAL ACTION**

The right to strike is supported, but only as a last resort when both parties cannot agree after a reasonable (prescribed) period of time or a break down of negotiations or re-negotiations of Australian Workplace Agreements or Certified Agreements, or when an employer fails to abide by minimum or agreed wages and conditions.

The concept of employer funded strike pay is not supported; this does not preclude use of union funds to assist striking workers.

Anti-strike legislation will be supported in relation to essential services to protect the public and the national interest where a threat arises to the health, safety and life of people.

**ACCOUNTABILITY OF UNIONS AND AUDITS**

Whereas unions are required to present their audited statement of financial affairs at Annual General Meetings, legislation will be introduced requiring those statements of financial affairs to be distributed to representatives in each workplace where their members are employed.

**MINIMUM WAGE**

The important role government has through appropriate mechanisms to determine and set minimum wage levels to protect workers and provide benchmarks for award determinations and enterprise bargaining is supported.

One Nation believes some Australians at present are enticed not to work because the gap between minimum award wages and unemployment benefits is too small. **Action will be taken to ensure an adequate gap exists between minimum award wages and unemployment benefits to provide incentive to choose work rather than welfare if an employment option is available.** To achieve this increase in the gap, any award wage increase will not be mirrored by directly proportional increases in unemployment benefits.

**SICK LEAVE**

The importance of sick leave entitlements as a safeguard is recognised. Business concerns that abuse of sick leave entitlements is costing business and industry millions of dollars per year is acknowledged. **Incentive programs which enable employees to be paid accrued sick leave entitlements while still safeguarding**
their current sick leave entitlements are supported.

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION

The tightening up of claim criteria, and of the audit, investigation and policing of fraudulent claims and abuse of entitlements are supported. The privatisation of Workers’ Compensation agencies will be considered in light of a number of anomalies, with the proviso that successful tenderers must have majority Australian ownership. These anomalies include ongoing losses accumulated by existing government controlled workers’ compensation authorities, past mis-appropriation of Worker’s Compensation funds by State governments and poor management practices, such as over-reliance on high cost consulting medical specialists to assess claimants’ legitimacy and the monetary value of claims.

EMPLOYMENT ADVERTISING

Employers must have the right to advertise specifically for the person they wish to employ, but discrimination based on race will not be tolerated.. This policy, which is designed to help both the employer and the job seeker, is considered to be essential as it protects job seekers who otherwise are continually applying for jobs which they have no chance of securing - the loss of self-esteem which follows constant rejection is seen as being a significant factor in causing individuals to stop looking for work.

UNFAIR DISMISSAL LAWS

The importance of protecting employees from unscrupulous employers is recognised; however the present legislation treats employers unfairly, and is seen as being one of the reasons for the increase in employment of casual labour.

Action will be taken at both state and federal level to address anomalies in the legislation which allow dishonest employees to use that legislation to protect themselves from the consequences of irresponsible or poor quality work practise and which enable employees to have an unfair advantage over a failing business.

The current legislative limitations on termination of employment which impeded the rights of employees and employers will be addressed. Employees will have the same rights to leave the employer as the employer has to dismiss the employee. Notice will still be given and required as will pay in lieu.

The current role of the AIRC in dealing with all cases of unfair dismissal on hard, unjust or unreasonable grounds is supported.

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION AND INCENTIVES

The value of employees providing input to businesses by virtue of their expertise and knowledge is recognised together with the fact that productivity of a business relies largely on the goodwill and interrelationship between employer and employee. Employers will be encouraged to seek out and make use of employee’s expertise and knowledge both at the time of enterprise bargaining and during the normal course of business.

Employee participation in business planning and other activities such as the selection of new employees is supported and encouraged, providing the employee receives adequate remuneration as an incentive negotiated between the employee or his or her representative and the employer.

FEDERAL AND STATE AWARDS

The duplication of federal and state awards which is entrenched in our present system is sometimes used by both employers and unions to attempt to gain advantage (ie ‘forum shopping’ between state and federal awards). Action will be taken to ensure all employees and employers are protected under their current contractual obligations. Forum shopping will not be allowed to negate or undermine existing contractual
obligations.

**EMPLOYEE PROTECTION - BUSINESS BANKRUPTCY**

Action will be taken to ensure employees’ entitlements are met before those of any other creditors in the event a business is bankrupt. Subject to further review, **legislation will be introduced to protect employees of small businesses; employees of big business or foreign owned companies will be protected by the introduction of compulsory insurance or the use of a compulsory trust fund. The order of priority for payment on the receivership of liquidation of a business will be: employees, Australian tax office, secured creditors, unsecured creditors and owners or directors of the business in receivership.**

**INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS (SECURITY OF PAYMENT)**

Independent contractors, sub contractors and suppliers will be **protected by the introduction of measures which will provide security of payment for goods and services.** See One Nation’s Small Business policy.

**ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN RELATION TO EMPLOYEES AND UNIONS**

Action will be taken to ensure all workers are aware that Australian jobs have been lost through current government policy of internationalising the Australian economy and that those same policies are responsible for the closure of bank branches and the demise of many businesses and industries. Steps will be taken to protect our standard of living, increase tariffs as required to protect our jobs and stop foreign ownership of Australian real estate and enterprises exceeding 49%.

One Nation believes that Australian employees and employers already share a vision of an efficient, productive and competitive future for Australia, and they expect and rely upon government to lead the way. One Nation will provide the essential leadership to help fulfil that vision.

One Nation will consult with unions and employer organisations on proposed industrial legislation and will **only support legislation which benefits both parties and is in the interest of Australians generally.**

**SUMMARY**

One Nation's Industrial Relations policy is based on fairness and equality for all Australian employees and employers. One Nation supports policies which emphasise self-worth, self-esteem and pride in Australian workmanship and achievements, as well as respect and remuneration for those who achieve more or are willing to work harder.

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