

## **STATEMENT OF ANGLICAN LEADERS' APPROACH TO** **'WORKCHOICES' LEGISLATION**

Leaders of Australia's 4-million-strong Anglican Church have outlined how they will respond to the Federal Government's industrial legislation, and promised continuing prayers that all those involved in discussions will strive for a fair and positive industrial relations framework. Australia's Anglican Church is a significant national employer and a major provider of welfare, aged care, education & community services. The Church's leadership holds various qualifications in business, law, economics and welfare.

- 1.) **We affirm the positive goals underlying the Federal Government's industrial changes**, including the principles of choice, flexibility, cooperative bargaining, stronger employee protections, improved work-life balance, simplified laws and systems, higher wages, more jobs and a stronger economy.
- 2.) **We believe the vast majority of Australia's employers and employees are fair and decent.**
- 3.) **We will contribute constructively to this important national debate, both to help Anglicans understand the legislation from a faith perspective & as friends of Australians with the least bargaining power** – including first-time job seekers, apprentices, mothers returning to the workforce after a long absence, families with children, mortgage holders, the increasing number of casual and part-time workers, people with disabilities, outworkers, unskilled workers, Australians with English as a second language, workers with frail-elderly parents and the mature-aged unemployed.
- 4.) **In doing so, we intend to assess if the legislation can, in fact, deliver the Government's promised outcomes.** We are mindful of serious concerns raised prior to the legislation's introduction, including whether the laws will guarantee true choice for all Australians; the minimum wage needs of families; threats to family time, weekends and holiday leave; unfair dismissal provisions; and the need for adequate safeguards.
- 5.) **We support economic growth and prosperity that enhances the common good of all Australians, and will raise only genuine concerns, in a constructive manner.** If the facts force us to raise such concerns, we would reject – as false – any portrayal of us as opponents of fair reform or advancement.
- 6.) **We want to assist the Government to deliver the best possible laws.** We are not motivated by partisan political leanings.
- 7.) **To do as the Government has urged and judge the full legislation on its merits requires appropriate time. We hold grave concerns that the present timeframe is not sufficient. All Australians need to understand the substance and impact of these proposed changes. Without sufficient time, they will be denied this opportunity.** The size and sheer legal complexity of the legislation requires greater time than is envisaged by the Government. Some 1200-pages of material were presented by Government last Wednesday. In considering what would constitute a fair period of review, we look to the time spent formulating the legislation and explanatory notes, and the time required for lay people to read, digest and seek advice on complex material prepared with the involvement of a large number of leading Australian industrial lawyers.
- 8.) **We seek an assurance from the Government that no aspect of the legislation introduced into parliament will be excluded from the Senate review of the legislation.**

Archbishop Phillip Aspinall, Brisbane & Primate  
Archbishop Jeffrey Driver, Adelaide  
Archbishop Roger Herft, Perth  
Archbishop Peter Jensen, Sydney  
Bishop Andrew Curnow, Acting Metropolitan, Melbourne & Bishop of Bendigo  
Bishop George Browning, Canberra & Goulburn  
Bishop Ross Davies, The Murray  
Bishop Brian Farran, Newcastle  
David Farrer, Wangaratta  
Bishop Philip Freier, The Northern Territory  
Bishop Godfrey Fryar, Rockhampton  
Bishop John Harrower, Tasmania  
Bishop David Mulready, North West Australia  
Bishop John Noble, North Queensland  
Bishop Garry Weatherill, Willochra  
Bishop Richard Appleby, Northern Region Brisbane  
Bishop Trevor Edwards, Canberra & Goulburn  
Bishop Stephen Hale, Eastern Region Melbourne  
Bishop Philip Huggins, Northern Region Melbourne & Chair of Anglicare Australia  
Bishop Graeme Rutherford, Newcastle  
Bishop Ron Williams, Southern Region Brisbane

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