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MEDIA RELEASE

14 November, 2008

ARBITRATION PROVISION ADDS TO UNIONS' POT OF GOLD

Trade unions have been further rewarded for their massive pre-election spending spree by forcing the Federal Government to include arbitration in new workplace relations laws, which are aimed at dismantling "WorkChoices".

The AHA's National Chief Executive Officer, Bill Healey, said today: "Despite repeated assurances, the Government has bowed to union pressure and left businesses employing low-paid workers exposed to outside parties determining what happens in their workplaces.

"The AHA has been prepared to accept special arrangements for low-paid workers based on assurances that outcomes would be determined in the enterprise.

"The addition of arbitration provisions will undermine good faith bargaining and turn the clock back to the days of central wage fixing.

"Business owners in key service sectors will need to get used to union officials knocking on their doors."

Mr Healey said the AHA has been involved in the development of the new legislation and has been impressed with the open way the Deputy Prime Minister has consulted with stakeholders, but today's announcement is inconsistent with previous undertakings.

"About turns like this undermine the trust required to develop fair and flexible workplaces," he said.

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