

SUMMARY OF THE NSW INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CHANGES

The Barry O'Farrell NSW Liberal Government has recently introduced laws (the Industrial Relations Amendment (Public Sector Conditions of Employment) Bill 2011 and the Industrial Relations (Public Sector Conditions of Employment Regulation 2011) that will allow the O'Farrell Government to unilaterally control and reduce the workplace rights and conditions of all public sector workers in NSW.

All local Liberal Members of Parliament voted with Barry O'Farrell to pass these laws.

The laws mean the Government will only allow wages and conditions for public sector employees to be increased by 2.5%. The cost of living has increased by 3.3% in the past year.

If public sector employees want a wage increase that keeps pace with inflation or actually gives an increase in real wages they will have to trade-off hard-won conditions of employment (except a mere 8 guaranteed conditions).

This means most conditions of employment are up for grabs, including:

- annual leave loading;
- defined benefit superannuation;
- picnic days, local fair days and public service bank holidays;
- flex leave;
- 35 hour week;
- 5 days carer's leave;
- 15 days sick leave per year of service;
- overtime;
- all allowances, including shift allowances and meal money;
- lunch breaks;
- training leave and study assistance; and
- redundancy provisions.

These types of conditions **MUST BE REDUCED** in order to get a wage rise above 2.5%. The Government can also seek to **IMPOSE REDUCTIONS** in these types of conditions on employees.

The laws also require that:

- ⇒ No wage increases be back-dated.
- ⇒ The savings must be **PROVEN** to have been achieved before any wage rise above 2.5% is actually paid. This is even if management has delayed implementing the savings.
- ⇒ Job cuts **DON'T** count towards savings.
- ⇒ If extra savings are delivered, the wage rise agreed won't be increased.

Significantly, the laws stripped the Industrial Relations Commission of its independence in deciding wages and conditions. The Industrial Relations Commission must now comply with **ANY** Regulation made by the Government in setting wages and conditions of public sector employees.

