

WORKPLACE AGREEMENTS, LABOR PARTY POLICY

1. Mr MacLEAN to the Minister for Labour Relations:

Has the minister's attention been drawn to reports that the Opposition, in government, would abolish workplace agreements and replace them with employer-employee agreements?

Mrs EDWARDES replied:

I thank the member for the question. Labor policy is all about restoring the power to union officials. In its document Labor talks very strongly about union officials. The so-called employer-employee agreement is designed to ensure that people do not get an agreement without union approval. Let me tell members how that works. An agreement must be tested against a union award or agreement. The Industrial Relations Commission sets the rules. An agreement cannot be registered if employment is conditional upon its acceptance, but employment can be conditional on the terms of a union agreement. There cannot be an agreement if a union agreement already applies and then, if we manage to get through all that, the terms of the agreement will be made public. Why? So the unions can have a target. If a person is a public servant, their only choice will be a union agreement. This is all about union power; it is all about Labor Party funds, because the stronger the union the more money for the Labor Party.