

“FORWARD WITH FAIRNESS” INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS POLICY

**382. Mr A.P. O’GORMAN to the Premier:**

Does the Premier support the federal opposition’s “Forward with Fairness” industrial relations policy, released today?

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER replied:**

Yes, I do, and I thank the member for the question. This will be seen as a very significant step in the political evolution of this country and towards the election of a Rudd Labor government, which many people are obviously looking forward to.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** The policy announced today actually takes up the concerns about conditions -

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** The policy takes up the concerns raised in Western Australia about the industrial relations policy settings announced some time ago by the federal Labor Party. It is pleasing to see that those suggestions, which better fit the needs of the Western Australian economy, have been taken up. The policy announced today strikes a balance between fairness and flexibility, and the protection of workers’ rights - something that John Howard’s WorkChoices policy and Australian Workplace Agreements do not. AWAs and WorkChoices equal “bad for Australia”. That is why the Prime Minister belatedly recognised that he had a problem on his hands and sought to remedy the problem with changes. Everyone in Australia knows that AWAs and John Howard’s WorkChoices are bad policies. They are very reminiscent of the sorts of bad policies that brought about the end of the Court government and the demise of the minister who brought in those policies, Graham Kierath. We may well see the same fate befall his federal colleagues. Under the new model, every worker has a safety net. Those who are paid under \$100 000 a year have the additional protection of an award. That is exactly as it should be. The model provides for collective agreements and gives workers the basic right to have unions represent them in negotiations. Importantly, the model is flexible; it recognises the flexibility that is required in a modern economy.

Several members interjected.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** Mr Speaker, it is interesting to see the rising agitation among Liberal Party and National Party members of Parliament and their supporters at national and state level, as it becomes more and more obvious that the policy announcements and policy settings that Kevin Rudd has brought into the Australian political domain are good policy settings and are accepted as such by the Australian people. I look forward to seeing Mr Rudd again and having further discussions with him.

Several members interjected.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** It is incredible, Mr Speaker; I thought there was a lockdown of not only horses, but also donkeys and mules. I thought the movement of donkeys and mules was prohibited in Western Australia until Friday, but somehow they got into Parliament! The donkeys and mules have been allowed into Parliament; perhaps we should call in the Minister for Agriculture and Food and ask him to take some action. There is supposed to be a lockdown of donkeys and mules, but clearly there is not. We need to investigate that.

Several members interjected.

**Mr A.J. CARPENTER:** I remind members that equine influenza affects not only horses.

The very good announcement made today by Kevin Rudd took up the suggestions put by the Western Australian government on behalf of the people of Western Australia and the Western Australian economy. I look forward to that policy being embraced by the Australian people.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** I call to order the member for Moore and the member for Murray.