



Murray Cowper MLA

Shadow Minister for Employment Protection; Emergency Services

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Rudd's Federal IR Plan will leave a minefield for employers

Shadow minister for Employment Protection Murray Cowper MLA has dismissed the State Government's backing of a Federal IR system, saying it could discourage job growth by creating uncertainty for employers.

He says that any national system would rely on a good faith agreement from each of the State Labor Governments and that without a national referendum to enforce Federal power, the states could change their mind at any time.

He also says that he cannot see the system working in the simple way that the Rudd Government is promising if public sector employees are not also covered by the Federal plan, and the Prime Minister again reiterated yesterday that they will not be.

"The lack of consistency in the plan will scare the business community, and they have every right to be scared because the State Government keep changing their mind on the issue."

Mr Cowper referred to late 2005 statements by then Minister for Employment Protection John Kobelke, saying that the West Australian Government would 'fight for the right to continue resolving industrial relations matters for Western Australians and not have Canberra rule from the East.'

He also doubts the State Government's resolve to oppose calls from UnionsWA to retain the State Industrial Relations Commission.

"Michelle Roberts last year spent thousands of taxpayer dollars introducing a whole new suite of amendments to our state's industrial relations laws knowing full well that this year she would back a Federal Labor Government's call to refer powers to that level."

"Whilst I support moves to increase cooperation between the state and federal levels on IR, unions and small businesses need a fallback position when things go pear-shaped at the federal level."

"WA has long been a leader in industrial relations since the Court Government, and the West Australian Liberal Party has consistently opposed moves to nationalise the IR system."

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