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# **ACTING PRIME MINISTER**

## **HOWARD'S HOLLOW PROMISE**

**John Howard's promise today that he would guarantee that workers receive the same rate of pay under his industrial relations system simply cannot be believed.**

**It runs counter to a raft of previous statements he has made on industrial relations, including his wholehearted embracing of the Victorian and Western Australian industrial relations systems.**

**Australians should remember that Jeff Kennett promised Victorian workers before the 1990 State election: "You won't lose a dollar".**

**Since then workers have seen: all State awards abolished, leave loadings for all Victorian workers abolished with workers losing an average of \$430 before tax each year; sick leave entitlements reduced and no entitlement to pro-rata sick leave; no entitlement to redundancy pay; and the independent Victorian IRC abolished.**

**That is why 400,000 workers have fled Jeff Kennett's industrial relations system and transferred to federal awards.**

**In Western Australia overtime, penalty rates, holiday loadings and hours of work are not guaranteed. The minimum hourly rate for young people is \$3.77 an hour. This is the system that John Howard said he would like to see throughout Australia.**

**If the Opposition Leader today genuinely wanted to ensure that workers should keep their current award and conditions, why then has he campaigned so long for industrial relations reform?**

**His belittling of the union movement today and his sidelining of the IRC are code language for an outright attack on the job security of workers, and in the end, wage cuts. It would also lead to massive industrial confrontation, just like John Howard's bad old days.**

The only guarantee of workers' wages is the Government's, which is enforceable through the IRC.

The employment advocate which Mr Howard proposes to have replace the IRC would do no more than in effect file workplace agreements. It would not have the power to protect the rights and conditions of Australian workers.

Under Mr Howard, Australian workers would have to finally seek fair conditions of employment through civil courts. This would be ridiculously expensive and cause major delays.

Despite Mr Howard's professed concern for Australian youth, he did little today to guarantee work and training opportunities for young people.

He owes young Australians the detail of his real plans, which undoubtedly will include cutting their wages, removing their conditions and abolishing Working Nation programs.

Melbourne

8 January 1996