

## **INDUSTRY, BUSINESS ENTERPRISE AND THE WORKPLACE**

### **Industrial Relations**

Family First sees the present Industrial Relations System as a realistic accommodation, generally, between the needs and desires for workplace flexibility, on the one hand, and requirements for safety, certainty, equity and justice for both employers and employees.

Family First recognises the need to accommodate competing interests and rights along with principals of natural justice, procedural fairness and the rights of all workers to receive a just wage whilst the entrepreneur receives a fair profit.

The freedom of businesses and the role of markets to ration and allocate resources are also a central aspect of this balancing act. Family First acknowledges that industrial relations outcomes must reflect what is just and fair for all parties concerned in the light of economic constraints at the level of the enterprise and the wider economy.

The Party recognises that a unique industrial relations system that has a legitimate place for trade unions has arisen and developed in Australia over a substantial part of our history. Family First believes that the system of Awards, Australian Workplace Agreements and Enterprise Bargaining generally meets the needs of Australian workplaces but acknowledges that many Australian workers are missing out on adequate conditions because of their casual or outworker status or because they are in unregulated and low paid industries.

Family First will support improved provision of minimum entitlements (such as sick leave, annual leave, and family leave) for employees who do not come under the above mentioned agreements or awards.

Family First will also seek to facilitate improved provisions to bring a proper balance to work and family life. The Party recognises that a level of empowerment and certainty for employees in regard to hours worked and the scheduling of work is of fundamental importance to achieving this balance. It also

believes that in all workplaces there must be a respectful accommodation of the responsibilities of parents towards their dependants and the maintenance of meaningful family life.

### **Balancing Work and Family**

Family First acknowledges that various economic constraints such as declining housing affordability, rising education costs, pressure to work longer hours or the rise of casual employment, employment options and family taxation and social security are impacting negatively on families' capacity to have real choice about their work and family balance. This balance relates to the daily affairs of family households and also to changes over the longer term in family life stages and the changing needs of parents and children.

Family First will support adequate provision of paid family leave, paid maternity leave, and extended unpaid parental leave to more workers. Family First will also seek to encourage greater flexibility in workplace cultures to allow accommodation to family needs in rostering, child care options and support for breastfeeding mothers. It will seek to promote flexibility to accommodate the needs of fathers, mothers and grandparents.

Family First believes that as demographic constraints begin to impact on the labour force these changes will become imperative for retaining and caring for valued employees.

Family First will seek to investigate ways to provide child care options that are more supportive of parent-child bonds in that they are as close as possible to workplaces in order to facilitate greater contact time and to further facilitate the continuation of breastfeeding which is highly beneficial to child health outcomes.

Family First will seek to promote genuine flexibility and choice for families so that they may have the capacity to provide full time parental care for their child for as much time as they feel is desirable. It will also seek to investigate measures that can facilitate certainty of re-entry to the workforce at an equivalent status after a

time focussed on parenting at home. Family First will seek to promote the value and status of the work of stay at home parents and household management so as to encourage greater acceptance of such choices in workplace culture.