



Media Release

Senator Mathias Cormann

Liberal Senator for Western Australia

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Labor does not have a mandate to destroy jobs!

The Rudd Labor Government does not have a mandate to destroy jobs and damage the Western Australian economy by rushing its flawed industrial relations legislation through Federal Parliament, Senator Mathias Cormann said today.

During his second reading speech on the Workplace Relations Amendment (Transition to Forward with Fairness) Bill 2008, Senator Cormann said the people of Western Australia did not support the Labor Party's policy at the Federal Election because they were concerned it would put the State's prosperity at risk.

"The Liberal Party and Liberal candidates in Western Australia received enough popular support to increase our representation in this Parliament," Senator Cormann said.

"We have a clear mandate to speak up for Liberal values and principles – to speak up for freedom of choice and to speak up for choice and flexibility in the workplace.

"We have a mandate to speak up for the right of an employee to directly negotiate their employment contract with their employer without third party involvement, and yes – subject to a no disadvantage test, which we support."

"We have a clear mandate to speak up for the economic prosperity and well-being of the people of Western Australia."

Senator Cormann said while the Opposition would not oppose the Government's bill, Liberal politicians, particularly those from Western Australia, had a responsibility to point out the many flaws in the legislation.

He also accused Labor Senators of downplaying the importance of a flexible industrial relations system to the Western Australian economy in their majority report into the Government's legislation.

In the report, the Government Senators said they were "underwhelmed by the import of what it heard" from Western Australia during the Senate committee hearings.

"The committee's Perth visit was an absolute farce, despite the importance of the WA economy to the strength of our national economy," Senator Cormann said. "Only three hours was allocated to hear from various witnesses and an hour and a half of that was taken up by Unions WA and a Labor friendly academic.

"The major employer organisation was scheduled for only 45 minutes of testimony.

"It was an absolute farce and the last thing Government Senators were interested in was finding the truth."

Senator Cormann said Western Australians were worried that this Bill would be the start of putting unions back at the heart of workplace relations arrangements across Australia.