



Wednesday, 2 April 2008

Award modernisation request received

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) will in the next few weeks begin consultation with peak union and employer bodies following the receipt of a formal award modernisation request from the Australian Government.

AIRC President Justice Geoffrey Giudice, who received the request yesterday, said award modernisation was a complex task requiring the full support and cooperation of major workplace relations stakeholders and other interested parties.

'The process will require the resolution of difficult issues, a great deal of hard work and the ability to compromise will be a valuable commodity. But success is important,' he said.

'Award modernisation is an unprecedented opportunity for all those involved to make a lasting contribution to the quality of industrial regulation in this country.'

The award modernisation request requires the AIRC to modernise more than 2400 awards in time for the commencement of the government's foreshadowed new workplace relations system in January 2010.

The process is expected to involve about 740 federal awards and 1670 state awards currently operating under the national workplace relations system as Notional Agreements Preserving State Awards (NAPSAs).

It will also require the AIRC to meet a number of objectives including ensuring that the new modern awards are simple to understand and easy to apply; provide a fair, minimum safety net; are economically sustainable; and promote flexible, efficient and productive work practices.

Justice Geoffrey Giudice said a specialist team within the Australian Industrial Registry had already begun preliminary research comparing relevant clauses in significant federal and state awards.

He said next steps included:

- convening a meeting in the next few weeks of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Australian Industry Group to discuss the process and a timetable;

- undertaking broad consultation to identify priority industries and occupations and to develop a model flexibility clause and the timetable for the process overall;
- establishment of a Full Bench which by 30 June should be in a position to publish the priority industries and occupations, a model flexibility clause and the timetable for the process.

A dedicated section of the AIRC website is currently being developed to assist those involved in the award modernisation process.

For **further information** about award modernisation:

- refer to the [text](#) of the AIRC Award Modernisation Request;
- see a table of significant tasks following this media release;
- see a [speech on award modernisation](#) presented by Justice Giudice on 2 April at the national conference of the Australian Mines and Metals Association.

Media inquiries:

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Award Modernisation process

The following table identifies some of the key events and tasks involved in the award modernisation process:

Date (where available)	Event/Task
1 April 2008	AIRC President receives award modernisation request
	Consultation with major employee and employer representative bodies on the best process to follow in modernising awards
	Consultation with major workplace relations stakeholders and other interested parties on priority industries and occupations for award modernisation, a model flexibility clause and overall timetable
30 June 2008	Completion of list of priority awards and occupations for the award modernisation process – to be published by an AIRC Full Bench
	AIRC begins consultation and preparing exposure drafts for each modernised award Consultation with stakeholders and interested parties on exposure drafts
31 December 2008	Completion of award modernisation in priority awards and occupations
31 December 2009	Completion of award modernisation process