



Speech by

**PAUL LUCAS MLA**

**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

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Hansard 10 November 1999

### **AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACE AGREEMENTS**

**Mr LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (10.26 a.m.): Over recent years in this House we have heard a lot from the likes of the member for Clayfield, Mr Santoro, and in Canberra from his Federal counterpart, Peter Reith, extolling the virtues of Australian and Queensland workplace agreements. Often they talk about the benefits for employers and workers alike. Whilst there might be some short-term cost savings for bosses, the cold hard facts are that workers who enter into AWAs get it in the neck. Let us look at the facts.

The September 1999 issue of the Agreements Database and Monitor, published by the Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training at the University of Sydney, notes that of all currently operating Australian workplace agreements as at the end of the June 1999 quarter, 79.7% of union certified agreements provided for wage increases, 58.4% of non-union certified agreements provided for wage increases, but of the Reith Australian workplace agreements only 29.5% guaranteed a wage increase to workers. The message is clear for workers: of those who enter into an AWA, less than one-third will get a wage increase. It is worse for AWAs that are longer than three years, as 78% of workers get no wage increase over the life of the AWA.

I table the relevant pages from the report and seek leave to have a table of these agreements incorporated into Hansard.

Leave granted.

Type of Agreement—% of Current Agreements

Union Certified Agreement (n=1667)—79.7

Non-Union Certified Agreement (n=483)—58.4

AWA (n=241)—29.5

**Mr LUCAS:** The story is the same when it comes to conditions of employment negotiated in AWA's. The report states that collective non-union agreements and Australian workplace agreements are far more likely than union agreements to contain provisions to reduce the payment for non-standard working hour arrangements. Similarly, Australian workplace agreements, at 42.1%, and non-union collective agreements, at 35.2%, were more likely than union agreements, at 27.8%, to provide a daily span of hours greater than 12. All members will realise the necessity to work long hours from time to time, but repeatedly working more than 12 hours in a day can only lead to serious long-term effects on one's family and health.

The figures do not lie. Workers are better off sticking with the union, which can negotiate for them. They should never, ever trust the member for Clayfield, Mr Santoro, or the Federal Industrial Relations Minister, Mr Reith, who say that QWAs or AWAs will deliver a better outcome for the worker.

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