



Public Hearings in Melbourne 26 – 27 April

Independent Contracting and Labour Hire Arrangements – Are they working?

Labour hire companies, unions and business groups are among the 18 organisations and individuals to appear before a House of Representatives committee inquiry into independent contractor arrangements. Representatives expected to appear include: Mr Peter Anderson from the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Ms Sharan Burrow from the Australian Council of Trade Unions.

The hearings in Melbourne on Tuesday 26 and Wednesday 27 April are the second set of public hearings for the inquiry, following Sydney last month.

New forms of employment arrangements characterise the Australian workforce of today. Amongst the changes in forms of employment is a rise in independent contractors and labour hire placements. The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Workplace Relations and Workforce Participation is inquiring into:

- the status and range of independent contracting and labour hire arrangements;
- ways independent contracting can be pursued consistently across state and federal jurisdictions;
- the role of labour hire arrangements in the modern Australian economy; and
- strategies to ensure independent contract arrangements are legitimate.

The Committee Chair, Phillip Barresi, said “The growth in labour hire has provided many organisations with greater flexibility in meeting work demands. Concerns regarding occupational health and safety, and skills development require the Committee to look closely at the responsibilities of labour hire agencies, client organisations and the workers involved”.

“Strong defence of independent contracting arrangements has been provided to the Committee as a beneficial work and lifestyle choice. However, claims that workers are being pressured to convert to such arrangements need to be investigated,” Mr Barresi said.

The inquiry was referred by Federal Minister Kevin Andrews, the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. The committee anticipates reporting mid year.

Further details on the inquiry, including the complete terms of reference, membership of the Committee and advice on making submissions can be obtained on the Committee’s website at www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/ewrwp or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 4162 or emailing ewrwp.reps@aph.gov.au

The program of witnesses for the two day hearings are attached.

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair, Phil Barresi, on (03) 9873 8351

For background information, contact the Committee Secretary, on (02) 6277 4162 or 0407 406 337

**House of Representatives Employment, Workplace Relations and Workforce
Participation Committee**

Inquiry into Independent Contractors and Labour Hire Placements

Public Hearing Program:

Venue: Victorian Parliament Committee Offices
Level 8, 35 Spring St
MELBOURNE

Tuesday 26 April 2005

1.00 pm Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
1.45 Recruitment and Consulting Services of Australia
2.30 Professor Andrew Stewart, Flinders University
3.30 Australian Council of Trade Unions
4.00 Association of Professionals Engineers, Scientists and
Managers
4.30 Independent Contractors of Australia
5.00 Labour Force Australia

Wednesday 27 April 2005

9.00 am Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union
9.30 SKILLED Group
10.00 Transport Workers Union – Federal and Vic/Tas Branch
10.45 Australian Nursing Federation
11.15 National Union of Workers
11.45 Job Watch

12.15 pm Lunch break

1.30 Law Council of Australia – Small Business Group
2.00 Australian Services Union
2.30 Civil Contractors Federation
3.15 Building Services Contractors Association
3.45 Employers and Regional Witness