



Sharon Grierson MP
Federal Member for Newcastle



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**WORKPLACE RELATIONS:
NO-ONE BUT HOWARD WANTS THIS FIGHT**

Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson said the release of the Government's industrial relations package today shows the obsessive, regressive Howard agenda to drive down wages and wind back workers' rights.

"If he was genuine about productivity reform, he'd have taken on the skills and infrastructure crisis in the Budget," Ms Grierson said.

"No-one wants this fight except John Howard."

"The working people who are the backbone of our society don't want it."

"The Boeing workers who have been stood down at Williamstown certainly don't want it."

"What they want is to exercise their freedom of choice - the choice to negotiate a collective agreement that is good for both employees and employers."

"The Howard Government speaks a lot about choice, but the changes it has proposed today will make it even harder for working people to choose collective bargaining arrangements, gain job security and be assured of a fair minimum wage in return for their skills and labour."

"A fair living wage, good faith bargaining, and conciliation have been the foundation of our workplace relations system for over a hundred years. This package tears that apart."

"John Howard's tired old line about being 'the best friend Australian workers have ever had' has always been laughable, but it will take on a more sinister meaning when he has absolute power in both Houses of Parliament."

"Now that we see the full extent of his agenda, the joke is well and truly over."

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