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## **WORKPLACE RELATIONS REPORT A MISSED OPPORTUNITY**

The Productivity Commission's Final Report on Australia's Workplace Relations Framework is a missed opportunity for significant workplace relations reform, according to Brett Hogan, Director of Energy and Innovation Policy at free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs.

"While the Productivity Commission has recognised that some changes need to be made, it just doesn't go far enough," says Mr. Hogan.

"Australia needs a new approach to employment law that acknowledges the diversity of modern employment practices and the different conditions in every workplace," says Mr. Hogan.

"The effective exemption of unions and employer organisations from competition law, the prescription of uniform wages and conditions regardless of the ability of a business to pay, and the blurred lines between participant, regulator, and legislator, are all areas for reform," says Mr. Hogan.

"However, rather than a blueprint for a better system, the Commission has instead delivered a patchwork of unrelated proposals," says Mr. Hogan.

"The recommendation to phase out compulsory Sunday penalty rates for retail and hospitality workers is welcome, but specifically exempting state health and emergency workers ensures that public sector workplace reform will stay in the 'too-hard' basket," says Mr. Hogan.

In its March submission to the Productivity Commission, the Institute of Public Affairs also noted that the minimum wage was a poorly targeted anti-poverty device that costs jobs.

"Centrally mandated, world's highest minimum wages that are automatically increased every twelve months and imposed over the whole economy, are not the most effective way to help people get and keep a job, or help struggling employers to compete in the global marketplace," says Mr. Hogan.

"The Productivity Commission has dropped the ball in the Turnbull government's court. An innovative workplace relations reform package must be taken to next year's federal election," says Mr. Hogan.

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