



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

PRESENTATION STATEMENT

**ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO
SELECT COMMITTEE ON WORKING FAMILIES
IN THE ACT INTERIM REPORT MARCH 2006**

JUNE 2006

**Released by the Authority of
Andrew Barr MLA
Minister for Industrial Relations**

The Government welcomes the Select Committee on Working Families in the ACT Interim Report and is pleased to note the level of interest shown by stakeholders through the submissions and attendance at public hearings. The Interim Report provides a comprehensive overview of the issues raised by stakeholders and summarises the core features of the legislative changes introduced by the Commonwealth, with a focus on the *Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Act 2005* (Work Choices), the *Building and Construction Industry Improvement Act 2005* and the Workplace Relations Amendment (Better Bargaining) Bill 2005.

Recommendations 1 and 2 relate to proposed amendments to the terms of reference for the Committee. Recommendation 1 proposes that the terms of reference be amended. Recommendation 2 proposes the amended terms of reference, with a focus on the Commonwealth legislation that stakeholders see as having the most significant impact on working families in the ACT. The amended terms of reference also include consideration of the impact of the Commonwealth legislation on current or potential ACT legislation.

The Government **agrees** with recommendations 1 and 2 as they focus the work of the Committee on areas identified as having the most significant impact on working families in the ACT, while continuing to provide scope to consider other matters.

Recommendation 3 proposes that the reporting timeframe for the Committee be extended to August 2007. The extension of time for the Committee's substantive report will enable time for the impact of the Commonwealth legislation on working families to be reliably reported

on. In the ACT, where it is expected that all employers and employees will be covered by the Work Choices legislation, the impacts of Work Choices may not be fully realised until current Workplace Agreements are renegotiated or the award rationalisation process is completed.

The Government **agrees** with recommendation three.

The final recommendation seeks resources for research support for the Committee to enable the effects of the Commonwealth legislative changes on working families in the Act to be adequately assessed. While the Government acknowledges the importance of the work of the Committee, it would not be appropriate for the Government to provide funding or departmental resources to the Committee. The provision of departmental resources to support the Committees may appear to compromise the independence of the Committee's findings.

The Government therefore does not agree with recommendation four.

The Government congratulates the Select Committee on the Interim Report and the work undertaken in considering the impact of Commonwealth legislation on Working Families in the ACT. It is important that the community has the opportunity to comment on the effect Commonwealth legislation is having on families in the ACT. The Select Committee provides this opportunity.

The Government looks forward to the further work of the Select Committee and having the opportunity to consider the final report when it is provided in August 2007.



ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

TO

SELECT COMMITTEE ON WORKING FAMILIES IN THE ACT

Interim Report

MARCH 2006

Report 1

**Released by the Authority of
Andrew Barr MLA
Minister for Industrial Relations**

8/6/06

ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON WORKING FAMILIES IN THE ACT INTERIM REPORT

INTRODUCTION

On 5 May 2005 the Legislative Assembly for the ACT resolved to establish a Select Committee on Working Families in the Australian Capital Territory (the Committee). The terms of reference for the Committee are:

To examine the effect on working families in relation to health costs, effects of industrial relations changes, adjustments by the Commonwealth Grants Commission and the allocation of funds by the Commonwealth, impacts on current or potential ACT legislation by the Commonwealth and any other related matter.

The Committee invited submissions on the terms of reference from stakeholders and the ACT Community. Public hearings were also conducted in December 2005.

The Committee received 10 submissions and seven organisations attended public hearings.

On 30 March 2006 the Committee tabled the Select Committee on Working Families in the ACT Interim Report (Interim Report). The Interim Report considers the issues raised through the submissions and the public hearings and also draws on a range of research material.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Interim Report makes the following four recommendations:

Recommendation 1

The terms of reference for the select committee on Working Families in the ACT be amended.

Recommendation 2

The amended terms of reference be:

The select committee on Working Families in the Australian Capital Territory is appointed to examine:

- *the effect on working families in the ACT of changes to industrial relations legislation, with particular reference to:*
 - a) the Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Act 2005;*
 - b) the Building and Construction Industry Improvement Act 2005;*
 - c) the Workplace Relations Amendment (Better Bargaining) Bill 2005; and*
- *the impact of these changes on current or potential ACT legislation*
- *any other related matter.*

Recommendation 3

The select committee provide its substantive report to the Legislative Assembly by the first sitting day in August 2007.

Recommendation 4

The committee recommends that the ACT government provide resources for research support for the Select Committee on Working Families, in order that the effects on working families in the ACT can be adequately assessed and to enable the final report to be tabled by the revised date.

GOVERNMENT POSITION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Government welcomes the Committee's Interim Report and is pleased to note the level of interest shown by stakeholders through the submissions and attendance at public hearings. The Interim Report provides a comprehensive overview of the issues raised by stakeholders and summarises the core features of the legislative changes introduced by the Commonwealth, with a focus on the *Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Act 2005* (Work Choices), the *Building and Construction Industry Improvement Act 2005* and the Workplace Relations Amendment (Better Bargaining) Bill 2005.

Recommendations 1 and 2

Recommendations 1 and 2 relate to proposed amendments to the terms of reference for the Committee. The amended terms of reference, outlined in recommendation two, focus on the Commonwealth legislation that stakeholders see as having the most significant impact on working families in the ACT. The amended terms of reference also include consideration of the impact of the Commonwealth legislation on current or potential ACT legislation.

The Government agrees with recommendations 1 and 2 as they focus the work of the Committee on areas identified as having the most significant impact on working families in the ACT, while continuing to provide scope to consider other matters.

Recommendation 3

Recommendation 3 proposes that the reporting timeframe for the Committee be extended to August 2007. The extension of time for the Committee's substantive report will enable time for the impact of the Commonwealth legislation on working families to be reliably reported on. In the ACT, where it is expected that all employers and employees will be covered by the Work Choices legislation, the impacts of Work Choices may not be fully realised until current Workplace Agreements are renegotiated or the award rationalisation process is completed.

The Government agrees with recommendation three.

Recommendation 4

The final recommendation seeks resources for research support for the Committee to enable the effects of the Commonwealth legislative changes on working families in the Act to be adequately assessed. While the Government acknowledges the importance of the work of the Committee, it would not be appropriate for the Government to provide funding or departmental resources to the Committee. The provision of departmental resources to support the Committees may appear to compromise the independence of the Committee's findings.

The Government does not agree with recommendation four.

**SUMMARY OF ACT GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO
SELECT COMMITTEE ON WORKING FAMILIES IN THE ACT
Interim Report**

RECOMMENDATIONS	GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
Recommendation 1 <i>The terms of reference for the select committee on Working Families in the ACT be amended.</i>	Agreed
Recommendation 2 <i>The amended terms of reference be:</i> The select committee on Working Families in the Australian Capital Territory is appointed to examine: • <i>the effect on working families in the ACT of changes to industrial relations legislation, with particular reference to:</i> <i>a) the Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Act 2005;</i> <i>b) the Building and Construction Industry Improvement Act 2005;</i> <i>c) the Workplace Relations Amendment (Better Bargaining) Bill 2005; and</i> • <i>the impact of these changes on current or potential ACT legislation</i> • <i>any other related matter.</i>	Agreed
Recommendation 3 <i>The select committee provide its substantive report to the Legislative Assembly by the first sitting day in August 2007.</i>	Agreed

RECOMMENDATIONS	GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
Recommendation 4 <i>The committee recommends that the ACT government provide resources for research support for the Select Committee on Working Families, in order that the effects on working families in the ACT can be adequately assessed and to enable the final report to be tabled by the revised date.</i>	Not agreed.