

Fair Work Australia

Australia's new national workplace relations tribunal commences operations on 1 July 2009.

Fair Work Australia assumes most of the functions of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC).

The AIRC will continue until 31 December 2009 to complete outstanding matters – in particular the award modernisation process.

An inaugural sitting of Fair Work Australia will be held in Sydney at 9 a.m. on 1 July 2009. The proceedings will be streamed live on the new FWA website at www.fwa.gov.au.

Fair Work Australia also assumes responsibility for minimum wage fixing from the Australian Fair Pay Commission and the collective agreement approval function of the Workplace Authority.

The tribunal has the power to carry out a range of functions including:

- providing a safety net of minimum conditions, including minimum wages, in awards
- facilitating good faith bargaining and the making of enterprise agreements
- granting remedies for unfair dismissal
- regulating the taking of industrial action
- resolving a range of collective and individual workplace disputes through conciliation, mediation and in some cases arbitration
- functions in connection with workplace determinations, equal remuneration, transfer of business, general workplace protections, right of entry and stand down.

Quick facts about the transition to FWA

Detailed information about the transition to Fair Work Australia (FWA) is available on the new FWA website. Regular users of Australian Industrial Relations Commission services can find here some quick facts about the changes as at 1 July 2009.

What are the key changes affecting users?

- The *Fair Work Act 2009* replaces the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* as the principal legislation underpinning Australia's national workplace relations system.
- Australian Industrial Relations Commission offices become Fair Work Australia offices.
- The new tribunal has a new website – www.fwa.gov.au.
- AIRC email addresses change to the format – name@fwa.gov.au.
- Users of tribunal services will be required to use new FWA forms.

What remains the same?

- The tribunal's offices remain in the same locations – in every State and Territory capital city.
- Phone numbers do not change.
- The AIRC website will continue until 31 December 2009 but most of its contents will be transferred to the new FWA website.
- Existing AIRC members have been appointed to Fair Work Australia.

Award modernisation

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission is set to enter the final stage of the award modernisation process.

Written submissions, drafts of modern awards and other proposals concerning the scope, content and transitional arrangements for Stage 4 modern awards close on 24 July 2009.

Final consultations on Stage 3 modern awards conclude on 3 July 2009.

The AIRC to date has issued 44 modern awards in the first two stages of the award modernisation process.

All modern awards are scheduled to be made by 31 December 2009.

Modern awards do not take effect until 1 January 2010.

Decisions by subject

The *Decisions by Subject* list available through the online edition of *AIRC News* is now updated to 1 June 2009. The list features AIRC decisions dating back to 1 July 2007—with hyperlinks to the actual decisions. To access the list go to ww3.e-airc.gov.au/newsletter/decisions. This section will continue to be a feature of the new Fair Work Australia newsletter.

Did you know?

The Australian Industrial Relations Commission will continue operations until 31 December 2009 to complete outstanding matters – in particular award modernisation. The AIRC website will continue until this time.

If you have any feedback on this newsletter please send an email to communications@airc.gov.au.

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