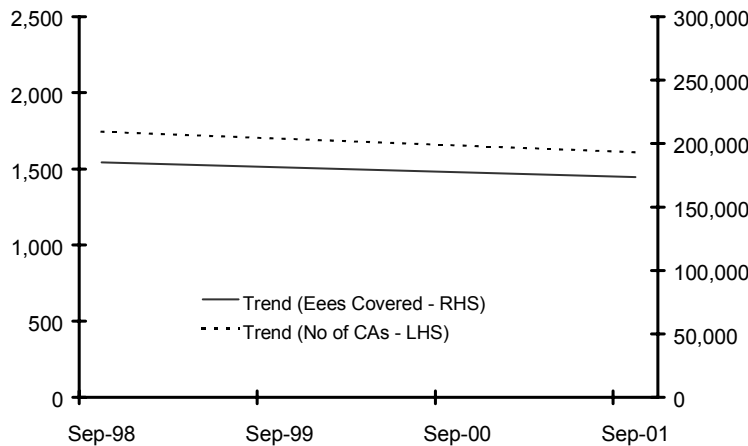


[8.5] This is underscored by an examination of statistical trends in agreement making during this period. The following figure shows the same data, but presented as simple linear trend lines:

Figure 6 - Certified Agreements Numbers and Coverage (Trends), 1998-2001



[8.6] This data could be characterised as stable, indicating that agreement making appears to be experiencing a period of consolidation.

[8.7] It is unclear whether there has been a slowing of the extension of the system to new workplaces, new employers and new employees, however this remains a live concern. Some industries may be particularly vulnerable to disincentives to enter into agreement-making.

[8.8] An examination of the issue of bargaining also needs to take into account changes in the type of workplace bargaining that employers and employees choose to enter into. For example, the number of AWAs approved during January 2002 was up 32.2% compared to the number approved in January 2001. AWA penetration in some industry sectors is in excess of 10%.¹⁸

¹⁸ OEA (www.oea.gov.au), *AWA Statistics*.