



Alan Eggleston
Senator for Western Australia



The Eggleston Report

26 Charles Street South Perth 6151 Tel: 08 9368 6633

Fax: 08 9368 6699 Email: senator.eggleston@aph.gov.au Website: www.senatoralaneggleston.com

CCIWA claims new IR Laws will cripple small business

As employers begin to face the challenges of the economic crisis alone after being left out of Kevin Rudd's \$42 billion stimulus package, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Western Australia believes their next big challenge lies in overcoming Labor's new Industrial Relations Laws.

In a submission made to the Senate Standing Committee on Employment and Workplace Relations, the CCIWA has responded to the new laws by detailing their effects on employers and small business. The report reveals the Rudd Labor Government's intent to reinvigorate the union movement by giving unions a say in the negotiations for new collective workplace agreements, which will potentially create problems for small businesses in the process.

Over the past decade the role of the unions has been on the slide. In the private sector union memberships have dipped below 10%, while in the Pilbara region in Northern Western Australia, where union memberships once thrived, the number has dropped below 20%, and continues to drop.

Under the new legislation, agreements will be collective and individual contracts will be wiped out, despite their success in Western Australia.

The CCIWA submission details how union representatives will have the right to be involved in any negotiations in workplaces employing union members, while any clause within an agreement can be appealed through Fair Work Australia. These appeals will cause long and costly delays, forcing the employer to cave to the unions demands.

Workers who have changed jobs can take their employment agreement to their new employer, allowing an agreement from job A to be taken to job B, and onwards, effectively removing the new employer from the negotiation process.

According to the CCIWA, union officials will have the right to enter the premises and inspect the records of all workers, provided there is a complaint about a break of awards. A simple claim of unpaid overtime, regardless of its legitimacy, will give

union representatives free rein throughout the workplace, and access to non union members for recruiting purposes.

It is difficult not to conclude that these laws, in particular the dismissal policy, will mean a return to the industrialisation of the 70's, prior to the Paul Keating reforms.

The business people the CCIWA represent will be concerned that these laws are effectively winding back 20 years of industrial reform, which have seen huge increases in Australia's productivity and competitiveness.



Mining operations such as Whaleback could be effected by the new laws, according to a report by CCIWA

Inside:

- Northern Australia Taskforce formed
- Ord development gets green light
- WA Ombudsman faces closure
- Oakagee Port must be a priority
- Stimulus package fails to deliver

March 2009

The Eggleston Report

RUDD'S PENNY PINCHING COSTS VITAL SERVICES

Now facing the arduous task of repaying a \$200 billion debt, the Rudd Government has embarked on a penny pinching crusade; his first victim - the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office in Western Australia.

Kevin Rudd plans to save \$120,000 in rent by closing this vital government office and relocating its staff to Adelaide. The result will be "phone only" access to the Ombudsman and reduced contact hours as a result of the time differences between WA and the East Coast.

Access to the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office in person, rather than over the telephone, has encouraged many Western Australians to bring forward their cases that would otherwise go unheard. This office plays an incredibly important role for the people of Western Australia, and is critical in bridging the psychological distance between Western Australia and Canberra.

Ultimately, the closure of the Commonwealth Ombudsman's Office will simply confirm the belief that the bureaucrats in Canberra do not appreciate the need to provide services on the ground in WA. What's more, there are also concerns over the future of the Outreach program which operates out of the WA office. This program focuses on service delivery in indigenous, regional and remote communities across Western Australia.

I've written to the Prime Minister urging him to protect the interests of the people of Western Australia and allow them continued access to this vital Government service. Closing vital Government services is no way to pay back debt, particularly debt incurred through reckless spending.



The soon to be closed Ombudsman's office on St Georges Terrace in Perth

OAKAJEE PORT A PRIORITY FOR WA

I have called on the Prime Minister to formally commit to the Federal Government's contribution of \$339,000 for the Oakajee Port project, which will develop common use infrastructure such as channelling and breakwater walls.

The \$1.5 billion Port, which will service the needs of the mining companies in the Mid-West, will be an economic stabiliser for the State's economy over the long term. The project is a major strategic asset, not only for Western Australia but for the Commonwealth.

The State Government, which has already committed matching funding of \$339,000 to the project, needs a commitment from the Rudd Government before entering into a formal agreement with Oakajee Port and Rail.

While it is short on infrastructure projects, the intentions of Kevin Rudd's spending spree announced in his stimulus package are to stabilise the economy and help steer our country away from recession - this project will help do just that.

Alan with the Speaker of the House of Representatives and Indonesian MPs at the conference on Indonesian/Australian relations in Sydney. The Conference was attended by Foreign Ministers of Australia and Indonesia, representatives of the media industry and educational institutions from both countries, and government officials.



Alan with Opposition Leader Malcolm Turnbull and other Coalition Members at the formation of the new Northern Australia Infrastructure and Resources Group. Alan is a member of the Coalition Members Northern Australia Taskforce.

ORD DEVELOPMENT GETS GREEN LIGHT

Stage 2 of the Ord is vital for the future of Australia's agricultural industry, and could see the region become the largest irrigated agricultural centre in Western Australia.

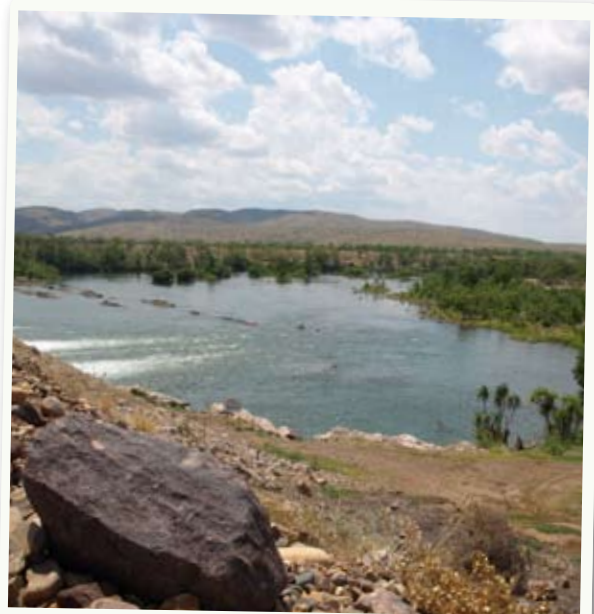
Kevin Rudd announced in November the Federal Government's support to the Stage 2 development of the Ord River irrigation scheme, after strong lobbying from my colleagues and I in Canberra.

By joining Premier Colin Barnett and Opposition Leader Malcolm Turnbull in their support for the project, Rudd has finally showed some decision making ability, although the release of the recent 'Stimulus Package' suggests this was a one off.

Federal support for the Ord River Stage 2 development in the Kimberley is a welcomed change to this government's water policy, which has been largely focused on the Murray-Darling. The decision also recognises the North, with its abundance of water, as the future of Australian agriculture.

The project already enjoys strong community support and an established agricultural industry that includes expanses of sandalwood, mango and banana plantations as well as exciting new plantations such as chia and cotton.

I will be working hard over the following months to keep Kevin Rudd to his word and ensure the rollout of this vital agricultural project.



Stage 2 of the Ord River Development will deliver a vital boost to the region's agricultural industry

The Eggleston Report

Tough times ahead as Rudd plunges country into deficit

Last month the Senate voted to pass Kevin Rudd's \$42 billion 'stimulus package', one of the single largest Government expenditures in Australia's history.

As a member of the Opposition I opposed this legislation as not only does it fail to provide Australians with the best possible value for money during this economic crisis, it ignores the critical infrastructure needs of Western Australia and Australia as a whole.

As the world wide economic crisis deepens, we need responsible government more than ever. Government that sets an example through responsible, measured policy, government that will protect our economy not just in the short term, but for generations to come.

The Coalition's view is that Kevin Rudd's \$42 billion 'fiscal stimulus package' is not responsible, nor is it measured. It is populist policy, the type of vote grabbing announcement that the Labor Party is renowned for – spend big and spend fast, and the subtext may be that this package should really be perceived as a possible sweetener for an election towards the end of 2009.

This 'stimulus package', is just another example of Labor spending big and building debt. What's most concerning for Western Australia is the lack of funding set aside for major infrastructure projects; job creating economic stabilisers for the State's economy over the long term. Of the \$42 billion, only \$890 million is to be spent on regional and local government infrastructure.

If Kevin Rudd is serious about protecting the economic future of Western Australia, he should commit the Federal Government to projects such as the Oakajee Port, a major strategic asset not only for

Western Australia but for the Commonwealth. New East-West road links across Alice Springs to the Kimberley (the Tanami Road), and to Newman in the Pilbara, or relieving the bottleneck at the Port of Dalrymple Bay in Queensland would have been more valuable national infrastructure projects. Another key nation building asset would be to ensure every major port has container-loading facilities to allow greater export capabilities.

The Liberal Party has opposed this legislation as it is irresponsible debt building policy that will leave our future generations with great financial burden. We will continue to put forward measured, conservative policies that will best stimulate the economy through job creation without recklessly driving Australia into debt.



NEW WEBSITE NOW ONLINE!!!!!!!!!!!!



Visit www.senatoreggleston.com to read my latest speeches and media releases, and find contacts for community organisations in the North West.

To register for my regular online newsletter, send me an email to senator.eggleston@aph.gov.au or call my office on 08 9368 6633

Printed and Authorised by Senator Alan Eggleston 26 Charles Street South Perth 6151 Tel: 08 9368 6633

Fax: 08 9368 6699 Email: senator.eggleston@aph.gov.au Website: www.senatoralaneggleston.com