

MEDIA RELEASE

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IR review cost blowout as government services starved of cash

The cost of Treasurer Troy Buswell's review of Western Australia's industrial relations system blew out by more than \$200,000 in just two days, according to information obtained under Freedom of Information laws.

The review will affect the working conditions of more than 300,000 workers and recommend changes in areas including individual versus collective agreements, the award safety net, minimum wages, statutory minimum conditions of employment and unfair dismissal.

In an answer given to the Parliament on 25 November last year, the Parliamentary Secretary representing Mr Buswell in the Legislative Council, Hon Helen Morton MLC, reported that the review had cost \$600,346. However, in documents obtained by UnionsWA under Freedom of Information laws, it has been revealed that, as at 27 November, invoices from Mr Amendola alone totalled \$849,817.

UnionsWA Secretary Simone McGurk said the fact Mr Buswell had given the review a blank cheque was scandalous, especially when Mr Buswell was slashing the budgets of government agencies delivering vital services to the community.

"The Western Australian public should be outraged that Troy Buswell has almost spent \$1million on a review designed to make it easier to sack people and cut their minimum standards and conditions at work," Ms McGurk said.

"What makes this expenditure all the more outrageous is that Mr Buswell's splurge has come at a time when he is slashing the budgets of health workers, school workers, police, child protection workers and other frontline State Government service providers.

"Mr Buswell has confirmed to the Parliament that the review has been completed and, despite costs continuing to escalate, refuses to release the recommendations and let WA workers know what he has planned for their workplaces.

"UnionsWA demands that Mr Buswell stop this ideologically driven waste of money and release the Amendola review to the public."

UnionsWA launched its No WorkChoices in WA campaign in September 2009, which includes a series of television commercials, to highlight the threat Mr Buswell's review poses to the more than 300,000 workers remaining in the State industrial relations system.

Ms McGurk said the No WorkChoices in WA campaign would be run until the State Government guaranteed that it would:

- Not introduce WorkChoices style individual contracts in Western Australia;
- Not erode minimum standards or the award safety net system in Western Australian workplaces;
- Maintain the role of the WA Industrial Relations Commission as the independent umpire;
- Maintain protections against unfair dismissal; and
- Maintain and improve public services in WA.

More information about the campaign could be found at www.noworkchoicesinwa.com.

Ends.

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