

MEDIA RELEASE



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Youth employment under threat as State Governments make employers think twice about hiring employees under 18 years of age

David Edwards, Executive Director of the Australian Retailers Association, today said retailers had responded with disbelief at the complete disregard state governments are showing employers to be able to run their businesses without drowning in regulation.

“Increasingly employers feel like road kill left by the side of the road as state governments rush to flagrantly disregard the impact of their ideological rampage against the federal workplace relations reforms” said Edwards.

Yesterday’s decision by the NSW Industrial Relations Commission, a decision they were compelled to make, following legislation passed in October last year imposes a second set of state based requirements on employers entering into federal agreements with employees under 18 years of age. “This decision and the NSW legislation will undoubtedly make employers think twice about hiring juniors”, said Edwards.

“Many Australians get their first work experience in retail jobs as junior employees whilst still studying and the retail industry hires almost half of all junior employees in Australia and many of these are in small businesses”, said Edwards. Edwards warned that youth unemployment levels are volatile and considerably higher than unemployment rates generally.

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“On the eve of finding out the detail of the new “fairness test” being introduced by the federal government NSW has rushed to impose a twin set of conditions on employers increasing the likelihood employers will find it all too hard to hire junior employees”, said Edwards.

“This type of total disregard for employers is likely to tell in a very practical way” Edwards said.

The Queensland parliament is currently debating another set of dual laws to impose on employers and Edwards urged the Queensland Government to think about the impact of their decisions on employers, particularly small employers.

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The Australian Retailers’ Association (ARA) is the peak retail employer association representing the interests of the largest employing industry in Australia. We provide leadership and solutions to improve the long-term viability, productivity and visibility of the retail industry by proactively dealing with government, media and other regulatory bodies. We also manage issues that impact members by lobbying Federal, State, Territory and Local governments to ensure members’ business concerns are given an effective voice.