



Morrison adds IR to Porter's wider role

WORKPLACE

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National employers have urged new Industrial Relations Minister Christian Porter to consider making changes to unfair dismissal laws, overhaul enterprise bargaining and reduce the role of the Fair Work Commission.

Business welcomed Scott Morrison's decision to add the politically sensitive industrial relations portfolio to Mr Porter's responsibilities as Attorney-General, insisting the Coalition had a mandate for "sensible and practical" changes to the workplace relations laws.

Mr Morrison said Mr Porter's new role would include "creating fairer workplaces" and focusing on the rule of law in industrial relations, particularly through the Australian Building and Construction Commission.

Mr Porter said his initial industrial relations focus "will be on the law enforcement aspects of the portfolio, ensuring adherence with Australia's industrial relations laws, particularly on building sites across Australia".

Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry chief executive James Pearson said Mr Porter would "understand very clearly the need for sensible and practical improvements in our workplace relations laws and regulations".

He called for changes to unfair dismissal laws, including greater deterrence against frivolous claims.

Australian Industry Group chief executive Innes Willox called for changes to the Fair Work Act, including the better-off-overall test. "We need to work to revitalise our enterprise bar-

gaining system, overhaul the better-off-overall test and work to end unions using insurance and income protection schemes as multi-million-dollar nest eggs for their benefit," Mr Willox said.

Australian Mines and Metals Association chief executive Steve Knott said: "In keeping with the PM's recent statement about improving blockages and inefficiencies in the public service, AMMA will encourage the new IR minister to review the appalling performance of the Fair Work Commission."

ACTU assistant secretary Liam O'Brien said while Mr Porter was previously critical of unions, the peak union body hoped the new portfolio was "an opportunity for him to engage with us on how Australia can solve the insecure work, low wage growth crisis".