



New Australian research evaluates legislative support for collective bargaining

by Anthony Forsyth


Australia's then Labor Government enacted legislation in 2009 aimed at restoring a collectivist framework for determining wages and employment conditions, following the radical experiment with individual bargaining under the former conservative Government's laws passed in 1996 and 2005.

The *Fair Work Act 2009* has been in operation for almost a decade, and has largely survived the return to a conservative Government in 2013. This new edited collection – [*Collective Bargaining under the Fair Work Act, Shae McCrystal, Breen Creighton & Anthony Forsyth \(eds\), The Federation Press, Sydney, 2018*](#) – evaluates the Fair Work Act and finds that some shortcomings in the regulatory design – along with employer strategies and court/tribunal interpretations – have exposed important limitations in the legislation's effectiveness as a basis for re-building collective bargaining in Australian workplaces.

The collection includes contributions from Australian, UK and North American researchers and practitioners. It is published in the context of a significant national debate over workplace reform, driven largely by the Australian Council of Trade Unions' campaign to 'change the rules' relating to union organising and bargaining.

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