Call for Papers

Journal of Industrial Relations

Fair Work Australia and the Legacy of the Commission

Colloquium: 24 February 2011, University of Sydney
Publication: Journal of Industrial Relations, November 2011

The purpose of the colloquium is to analyse an aspect of the Rudd Government’s Fair Work reforms that has not attracted the attention it deserves: the replacement of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission by a new agency, Fair Work Australia. As a tribunal whose primary role was to help resolve labour disputes, the Commission could trace its lineage back to the original Court of Conciliation and Arbitration. Its replacement, FWA, has a broader range of functions, only some of which involve operating as a tribunal. FWA’s processes for approving agreements or setting minimum wages owe at least as much to the Workplace Authority or the Fair Pay Commission as to the AIRC. Its procedures for making or varying modern awards have also now been divorced from any role in settling disputes.

The aim of the colloquium is both to look back, at the passing of the Commission and the legacy it leaves behind, and forward, to how FWA may conceive, manage or even expand its various functions. In particular, papers are invited on any of the following topics:

- how the federal arbitral tribunal has evolved since 1904, and more especially since the AIRC was created in 1988;
- the lasting influence the tribunal can be said to have had on industrial relations in this country, or more generally on social and economic conditions;
- the extent to which FWA can be expected to carry on the work and traditions of the tribunal that preceded it;
- how FWA could or might adapt to new roles in the future;
- the conceptual nature of the AIRC (and/or FWA) as a regulator, institution, participant or stakeholder in industrial relations.

Contributions are invited from specialists in industrial relations, law, management, economics, history, sociology or other disciplines. The organisers would also welcome papers that approach any of the topics set out above from a comparative perspective.

Papers which are accepted will join a small number of other invited participants at the colloquium. Each paper will be submitted in advance for participants to read, then presented and discussed. There will subsequently be an opportunity to revise papers, for publication in a special issue of the Journal of Industrial Relations, to appear in November 2011.

Those who are interested are asked to submit a detailed abstract of approximately 500 words. These should be sent to the JIR’s editorial assistant Rawya Mansour (see below) by 1 September 2010. The organisers will endeavour to advise whether the abstract has been accepted by 15 September. Those who are successful will be expected to submit full paper
drafts for discussion at the colloquium by 29 January 2011. After the colloquium, all papers will be peer reviewed in the normal way; they must be submitted by 24 March. Revisions will then need to be completed by 1 June.

Rawya Mansour
Editorial Assistant, Journal of Industrial Relations
+61 2 9351 6656
rawya.mansour@sydney.edu.au

Guest editor
Professor Andrew Stewart
School of Law, University of Adelaide,
+ 61 8 8303 4445
andrew.stewart@adelaide.edu.au