

Hon Kevin Andrews MP
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for the Public Service

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Media Release
Independent Contractors Bill

The Coalition joint party room today approved the Independent Contractors legislation, which will now be introduced to the House on Thursday. The policy as announced on 3 May 2006 remains unchanged.

The Bill will protect the right of Australia's independent contractors to be truly independent, preventing them from being roped into state laws which effectively force them to be 'employees'.

The protections in the Bill build upon the rights of Independent Contractors contained in WorkChoices, under the freedom of association provisions.

As previously announced, the Bill will maintain the status of Textile, Clothing and Footwear contracted outworkers as employees under state legislation, consistent with the Government's approach under the WorkChoices Act.

The Bill will not override the existing protections for owner-drivers in New South Wales and Victoria, the only two States with such legislation.

During the winter recess the Government will continue to consult with relevant stakeholders.

As previously announced, a review into these specific provisions in NSW and Victoria will be undertaken in 2007.

The terms of reference of this review are yet to be finalised. The intention will be to rationalise these laws with the aim of achieving national consistency.

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