

## Letter on Opposition Policies

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*(Square bracketted deleted by Ed)*

The Coalition has apparently talked itself into a position of feeling unable to oppose government policies and legislation when it has either previously adopted a similar major change in policy to the Government's or because the latter claims an electoral mandate.

Such is the pusillanimity that two important policies involving very major structural changes likely to have serious adverse economic effects, emissions trading and WorkChoices, are now in danger of being waved through with only minimal questioning.

Is it too much to expect the principal Opposition political party to contemplate the possibility of either changing its mind or stating that the way the government proposes to implement the policies is totally unacceptable? What precisely does an electoral mandate mean?

At the very least, the Coalition surely has a duty to the Australian public to ensure that the likely consequences of the government's proposals are fully examined and explained in detail. No such consequential examination appears likely.

[To give just one example. One obvious question is how the large group of people, mostly unskilled, who don't have a job but who would like one are going to fare under the proposed Fair Work Australia scheme. The Government's focus has been on being fair to those who have jobs. But will this be at the cost of those who don't have one, a group now likely to grow much larger? In reality, there is a high risk that Fair Work Australia in its present form will, for a number of reasons, be highly unfair to those outside the work force. The Coalition should insist that the unfairness potential be removed from the legislation.]

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