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INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CHANGES WILL LEAVE NSW ECONOMY HURTING

Large swathes of NSW's industries and localised economies face serious damage if the federal government's industrial relations bill passes through parliament, the state's peak business organisation has warned.

Business NSW remains extremely concerned wholesale changes to the country's industrial relations system will take a sledgehammer to what is a fragile economy emerging out of three years of pandemic and natural disasters.

The proposed bill will give unions the power to force multiple, barely connected employers to the bargaining table.

It will also send employers to the Fair Work Commission to arbitrate over flexible work conditions.

Business NSW CEO Daniel Hunter said the changes would create a pressure cooker environment for business at a time when enterprises are about to absorb a 56 per cent increase in energy costs.

"Small and medium business are the beating heart of the NSW economy and these changes would cause unnecessary damage to those enterprises," Mr Hunter said.

"The proposed changes would effectively hand over key operations of a business to the FWC, which will hurt productivity and make employers less likely to hire new staff.

"Disputes which would otherwise be handled between employers and unions would be quickly referred to compulsory arbitration.

"While expensive workplace lawyers might be celebrating, mum and dad family businesses and medium-sized operations will be counting the cost.

"The changes would also force those employers to join in bargaining arrangements with industry competitors.

"The federal government's proposal - to effectively make enterprise agreements open for negotiation at any time - will create uncertainty for business."

Business NSW is calling on the federal government to consult with business to ensure the state does not return to a time of picket lines, industry-wide industrial action and rolling strikes.

“The Sydney train strikes have already given us a taste of how broad-stroke industrial action can bring a modern city to its knees,” Mr Hunter said.

“We need a sensible, measured approach to industrial relations which we can all reap benefits from, not a return to bygone industrial warfare.”

About Business NSW

Formerly the NSW Business Chamber, Business NSW is the peak policy and advocacy body which has been representing businesses in NSW since 1826.

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