

Preface

The scope and purpose of this book are discussed in detail in Chapters 1 and 11. It suffices to say that we had been discussing for some time the need for a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the Howard Government's Work Choices reforms on Australian labour law. The election of the Rudd Government in November 2007 provided us with the impetus to get the project going, and to broaden its focus by examining the implementation of Labor's 'Forward with Fairness' policy.

The book owes much to the generous financial and administrative support provided by the Workplace and Corporate Law Research Group at Monash University, and the Centre for Employment and Labour Relations Law at the University of Melbourne. This support, and the organisational skills of Leanne Hunt and Anne Mulcahy in the Department of Business Law and Taxation, enabled a very successful research workshop to be held at Monash's Caulfield Campus on 2-3 July 2008. The papers from that workshop, updated to take account of the Fair Work Bill 2008, are collected in this volume.

We must also acknowledge the fantastic contributions of the authors of the various chapters in the book. They were not only lively participants at the July 2008 workshop, but have also responded diligently to our many requests for refining and updating the papers for publication. Thanks are due, as well, to others who attended the workshop and contributed valuable ideas, including Richard Mitchell, Commissioner Greg Smith AM, Paula Darvas and Anne O'Rourke.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Mark Hosking for his work in helping to edit the workshop papers. Special thanks must also go to Chris Holt at Federation Press, who took little persuasion about the worth of a book such as this and gave it his full support. We are also grateful to Chris's team at Federation, especially Kathy Fitzhenry and Clare Hallifax, for their assistance in the editing process.

Last, but by no means least, we wish to thank our respective families for their love and ongoing support.

The chapters have been updated to the end of January 2009. They do not take account of subsequent developments, including the passage of the Fair Work Bill through Parliament on 20 March 2009 and the introduction of the Fair Work (Transitional Provisions and Consequential Amendments) Bill 2009. However, an update on the final version of the Fair Work Act 2009, and the extent to which it differs from the proposals

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discussed in this book, is available from the Federation Press website <www.federationpress.com.au/supplements>.

Finally, a technical note about references to the Workplace Relations Act 1996. Some chapters use 'pre-reform' to refer to provisions in the Act prior to the Work Choices amendments in March 2006. 'Pre-transition' refers to the Act as it stood before the Transition Act amendments in March 2008. Simple references to the 'WR Act' are to the current version of the Act, except where the context indicates otherwise.

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