

MEDIA RELEASE

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WHITE PAPER SQUIBS HARD QUESTIONS ON LABOUR MARKET REFORM

The Australia in the Asian Century White Paper will fail in its objectives because it does not tackle labour market reform as a prerequisite to domestic economic reform.

It is bizarre that the Prime Minister is spruiking Australia's 21st century role in Asia while supporting a workplace relations system which is governed by structures that are anchored in the early decades of the 1900s.

The White Paper acknowledges that we must increase our productivity if we are to participate in the Asian Century and has an emphasis on education, innovation and training to do so.

But any productivity increase from these sectors hinges on improved labour market flexibility if the benefits are to be levered to their full extent as does any other sector of the economy.

Disappointingly the paper does not even scratch the surface of labour market reform as another tool in the nation's armoury to advance our national economic interest.

The paper also discusses reducing the regulatory burden on businesses so they can seize opportunities.

Yet our workplace relations system is one of the biggest regulatory burdens on both small and large businesses that exist.

Awards for example govern the daily minutiae of every workplace creating workplace environments that are the antithesis of the flexibility business needs.

This blind eye to the need for labour market reform is not Nelsonian, rather it obtuseness in the face of reality. *Further information: Ian Hanke 0407 841 957*