

Abbott rules out statutory individual contracts

Opposition Leader Tony Abbott has ruled out re-introducing statutory individual contracts.

[Speaking](#) on the ABC's 7.30 program last night, Abbott said that, "Well, we don't support statutory individual contracts. We did once, we don't now."

He continued that, "We're happy to look at building more flexibility into the Fair Work Act. As [AiG chief executive] Heather Ridout said the other day, the individual flexibility agreements under the Fair Work Act have promised so much, delivered so little, and I'll be looking forward to the kind of suggestions that people like Heather might have once they've spoken to their members."

Abbott's latest statement puts the Opposition back to where it stood going into the last federal election up until his late "no change" announcement: supporting a revamp of IFAs and exempting small business from unfair dismissal laws.

And, it comes after late last month arguing for more IR "freedom" (see [Related Article](#)), and despite pressure from within sections of his parliamentary party and former Howard Government Minister Peter Reith (see [Related Article](#)).

Shadow Workplace Relations Minister Eric Abetz speaking ahead of last year's federal election, said the Coalition's policy would be to make IFAs "more flexible, and a more practical option for employees and employers" (see [Related Article](#)).

He maintained that the existing flexibility agreements were rarely being used and were "so regulated and stifled that it is simply not worth the trouble".

"IFAs sound good in theory and Ms Gillard promised that they would provide an option for workers and managers who wanted to work in a manner distinct from the one-size fits-all approach that Labor holds so dear," he said.

"But unlike so many of Labor's promises, the practical reality is different."

The AMMA has also criticised IFAs as failing to deliver