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### 'FLEXIBLE GRIEVANCES' ON THE WAY

Ever been burned by a PG? Lots of employers have. Get the process wrong under the ERA and you'll cop one. The grievance train is set to get faster if the 'flexible hours' Bill, promoted by Sue Kedgley, gets through Parliament. It's supposedly about letting staff ask for changes to their working hours. Someone should tell Sue they already can...

#### Flexible Hours Bill is grievance trap

The proposed legislation relates to staff with certain family responsibilities, and would let you agree to their requests informally, but once they made a formal request, there'd be process requirements on how you respond, and labour inspectors, mediators and court proceedings involved if you said no. Union officials would get involved if you had any collective agreement in place – even if the employee making the request wasn't a union member.

#### Sue's Bill is OTT

Employers might be thinking the Bill is a bit over the top – after all, the vast majority of enterprises do their best to look after their staff needs, as shown by a Robert Half [survey](#) released this week showing NZ employers are leaders in their attitudes to flexible work needs. **When?** It's not clear when the Bill will be voted on – it could be as soon as a fortnight or take up to three months. To be safe, employers should urgently ask their MP to vote against it. If you want to know more or want to help send a message to MPs, contact [pmackay@businessnz.org.nz](mailto:pmackay@businessnz.org.nz) or [kasare@businessnz.org.nz](mailto:kasare@businessnz.org.nz)

#### SPOTLESS SAGA SUMMARISED

The [last edition](#) of Business Update outlined the story behind the strikes against hospital contractor Spotless Services. Spotless had wanted to pay out a wage increase in a way that rewarded performance, rather than a uniform rate. The union had wanted a sector-wide collective contract ('meca') - this would have given the union the power to call sector-wide strikes. Fortunately this didn't happen. The stand-off ended with Spotless giving up on its plans for performance pay and the union giving up on the meca.

#### CARBON TRADING – WHAT'S HAPPENING

Every man and his dog are off to talkfests about climate change and carbon trading. To save you and your dog the trouble, here are the six main facts....

Grievance watch: 'flexible hours'

Process requirements

Ask your MP to vote it out!

Union bid for sector-wide power defeated

Six main facts about climate change & carbon trading

## SIX MAIN FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON TRADING IN NZ

**FACT 1:** Scientists mostly agree we can acceptably restrain climate change if all countries get their carbon emissions back to 1990 levels by 2050

**FACT 2:** This basically means cutting back energy use (while developing new technologies to capture carbon)

**FACT 3:** Countries including NZ will want to set a 'cap' on emission levels – if your firm's emissions exceed the cap, you will have to buy carbon credits to offset this or face a financial penalty

**FACT 4:** That will require a system of measuring and monitoring emissions - NZ hasn't got one yet, but that will be relatively easy, just measure energy use as a proxy for starters (more accurate measures will come later)

**FACT 5:** It will also require a carbon trading system to buy and sell the credits - we haven't got one of those yet either - that will be harder as it's a complicated, technical thing to set up

**FACT 6:** The Govt appears to want a system up and running before next year's election, but that's a bit of a rush - Australia is taking 4-5 years to develop theirs, while Europe's took several years and still had problems. The message is, let's do it properly and get it right – even if we don't quite make it in time for the election campaign...

### **Business alert – upcoming conferences**

- [Waste minimisation legislation](#) – it will affect your company
- [Managing the future of global supply chains](#) - electronic tracking of goods and the like

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**Get back to the '90s**

**Cut energy use**

**Cap emissions**

**Measure them**

**Get a trading system**

**Get it right**

**Upcoming conferences**