

Topic Review

Topic 4: Employment Relations

Multiple Choice

- 1 C The nature of employment relations
- 2 B Legal framework of employment
- 3 C Industrial conflict
- 4 A Key influences on employment relations
- 5 B Industrial conflict
- 6 A Industrial conflict
- 7 D Industrial conflict
- 8 B The nature of employment relations
- 9 D The nature of employment relations
- 10 A Industrial conflict
- 11 D Ethical and legal aspects
- 12 C Industrial conflict
- 13 C Industrial conflict
- 14 D Industrial conflict
- 15 D Effective employment relations

Short Answer Questions

Question 1

- (a) There has been increase participation of women in the work force particularly as married women such as Marlene return to the work force after raising children. Another change that has occurred is the increase in casual and part-time employment, as employers seek more flexibility with their work force. This trend suits teenagers and women.
- (b) One way that employers could assist Marlene in their management of employment relations is to implement family friendly programs, such as the introduction of a flexible working week which could allow Marlene to spend time with her children on weekends. The employers could also incorporate family leave into any work contract to enable Marlene to take leave when her children were sick.
- (c) Full time and part time employment are similar in that employees have permanent status of employment and are usually able to access provisions such as annual leave, sick leave, long service leave, maternity leave and overtime. There is usually a period of notice required from either the employee or employer before leaving employment (it may be as short as a week or as long as a month. Usually hourly pay rates are less than for casual employees.

Casual employees do not have the security of full- or part-time workers and their employment can be terminated almost immediately. They are paid more because they cannot access leave provisions and are usually paid an hourly rate.

Question 2

- (a) Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) is covered in NSW by the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000. The Act and its regulations aim to promote the health, safety and

welfare of people at work as well as protecting people against health and safety risks in the workplace. This includes protecting workers from risks when using plant and equipment. The Act tries to achieve its aims through cooperation between employers and workers.

- (b) Overt forms of industrial action such as strikes, pickets and work bans are forms of action that are apparent and obvious. Those taking the action are trying to make a point to convince management to change its mind. Covert action is not obvious or visible to other stakeholders or the public but can be very disruptive to the business. It can take the form of absenteeism or sabotage.
- (c) Work to rule: the workers at Cast Iron Foundry began their campaign with this overt action where they only do the tasks that are specified in their employment contracts. All other tasks (which may have helped both workers and employers are banned. By not performing these extra tasks the workers hope to disrupt the business.

Absenteeism: workers next used this covert form of action to disrupt production. They took sick leave when they weren't really sick, to disrupt production and cost the business money.

Strike: as things became worse and previous industrial action had not worked, employees took the overt action of withdrawing their labour or going on strike until the management had met their demands.

- (d) Negotiation: Occurs where each party to the dispute tries to resolve differences by making or offering concessions to the other party. It is often unsuccessful because each party approaches negotiations as a win/lose proposition. Unless each side is willing to compromise negotiations will not work.

Conciliation: is basically the way the Australian Industrial Relations Commission operates under Work Choices. Disputes can be referred to the AIRC for conciliation rather than arbitration and the court will help the parties to reach their own settlement. The disputing parties are brought together in front of a Commissioner and encouraged to compromise and reach an agreement. It will have similar success to negotiation.

Arbitration: occurs when an industrial tribunal adjudicates on a dispute. The judgement has the force of law and to ignore the judgement is to break the law and suffer its penalties.