Industrial Relations Reform:
A Comparison of New Zealand and Australian experiences

by Dr Peter Ross

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has linked the globalisation process to a relative decline in the national autonomy of employment relations systems. This has been further associated with increased capital mobility, labour market deregulation and increasing income disparities. Within this context successive New Zealand and Australian governments embarked on industrial relations (IR) reform. Such reforms were often ‘sold’ by governments in both countries as being necessary in order to make their economies more internationally competitive. These changes occurred more rapidly in New Zealand. In 1993 the OECD stated that New Zealand had experienced more economic deregulation and legislative reforms than any other OECD country. This included the introduction of the Employment Contracts Act (1991), which replaced the former century old IR system. Given the historical and cultural links between the two nations, an examination of labour market deregulation in New Zealand may provide a precursor of the possible longer term labour market effects of Australia’s recent Work Choice’s legislation. It further provides avenues for discussion on the type of employment relations system that countries should aim for and the degree of strategic choice that governments actually have within an increasingly open global economy.

Æ Thursday 19 April 2007
Æ Room N72_-1.18 (Business 2)
Æ Nathan campus,
Æ 12.30-1.50pm

A light lunch will be served on arrival. To RSVP, please contact Jo Gilbert on (07) 3735 3730 or j.gilbert@griffith.edu.au no later than 5.00pm Monday 16th April.