

Comments made by Heather Ridout to the Australian Financial Review, Monday 21 September 2009.

“The old facilitative clauses that Dave Oliver wants to hark back to meant that if a mother wanted to collect her kids early from school, they would have to ask everyone on the shop floor whether that was possible and get a collective vote on it.

“That harks back to the dark ages. Workplaces are made up of individuals who also have collective interests. People have individual circumstances and the old trade based union system that ruled the roost meant that individual issues, particularly female issues, didn’t even get a look in.

“It needs to be acknowledged that flexibility clauses can be cancelled at any time. There are huge protections there...and there are huge penalties for coercion.

“I’d call it a no flexibility clause that the AMWU is putting up. What they are saying is that you can only negotiate around a couple of things and you can only do so if you consult with us.

Heather Ridout.