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News	ABC Radio	ABC TV	Public Affairs	Rural	Asia Pacific	Sport	
Kids	Youth	Science	Arts & Culture	Education	Indigenous	ABC In your Area	Health



News Home  
Top Stories

Just In

World

Australia/Local

Business

Politics

Weather

Sport

Health

Arts

Sci-Tech

Media

Environment

Rural

Indigenous

Offbeat

In-Depth

Forums

Services

Help/Site Map

Programs 



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## Dalwallinu backs Christian group's exemption moves

The Shire of Dalwallinu is supporting moves by a local Christian group to be exempted from parts of state labour relations reforms which conflict with their beliefs.

Dalwallinu Shire chief executive Bill Atkinson says the Brethren is against giving unions unfettered access to its workplaces but has no issue with government access.

Mr Atkinson says the group provides strong business investment in Dalwallinu and other country areas.

He says the Brethren community has stated this investment would be transferred to other states if the Labour Relations Bill is passed in its current form.

"In Dalwallinu itself the Brethren employ 12 per cent of the workforce of the community and we have 19 Brethren-owned businesses in Dalwallinu and Kalannie, so it is a fairly significant part of our economy," he said.

In Gnowangerup, where there is a significant Brethren population, shire president Jan Savage says it is less likely to be an issue as she understands many of those employed are family members.

A spokeswoman for Labour Relations Minister John Kobelke says the Government has spoken with the Brethren community regarding its concerns.

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She says it has a policy that employees have the right to form unions and that those unions have the right to enter workplaces within the proposed legislation.

She says the desire of the Brethren to operate according to its religious conscience must be balanced against the rights of employees to associate with trade unions.

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