The Contract Regulation Club
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The Contract Regulation Club has been the dominant force in Australian industrial relations since the latter part of the 1980s. Its membership includes major business and employer organisations, leaders of the Liberal and National parties, various regulatory bodies, ‘New Right’ think tanks and media commentators. Its modus operandi is doublethink. It advocates deregulation of employment contracts while intervening in their operation and demanding more regulation to ensure that they are loaded in ‘favour’ of employers. The Club has a vision of an industrial relations nirvana where employees voluntarily align their behaviour to the needs of the enterprise. The paper argues that this vision is fundamentally flawed and is the basis of the Club’s demand for more regulation. The paper examines the origins and consolidation of the Club, activities and interventions after the election of the Howard Coalition in 1996 and major features of the Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Act 2005 (Cth).