



Picture: ANTHONY JOHNSON

WORKERS BEWARE: Joshua Nicholls is concerned the new unfair dismissal laws may be abused by dodgy bosses.

Good bosses don't need the might of the law

IF unfair dismissal laws are so bad, perhaps somebody had better tell Joshua Nicholls of Platinum Electrical Contractors or Paul Greenberg of DealsDirect.com.au.

While both welcome the proposed exemption from the laws of companies employing up to 100 people, they aren't exactly manning the Government's barricades either.

Nicholls won the prestigious Australia Post small-business award, employs 27 people and is looking for another two positions at his Blacktown base in a business

with an annual turnover of more than \$2 million. He should be the perfect role model.

The change sounds like a good thing, he says, but adds, "The only problem will be if you get dodgy bosses taking advantage. Some might abuse it, possibly."

Like most successful small businesses, Nicholls pays way above the NSW award rate.

"I couldn't get anyone on an award rate," he says.

Not that it worries him. "We make a decent mark-up on what we charge."

He's only had to dismiss two employees and it was amicable enough. "I've never had a big case against me," he says. "It sounds like [the reforms] would be better for me if that ever arose."

In fact, his only complaint about the state award is that there are a couple of "picky" things in it, such as a travel allowance for the extra distance if the first job of the day is further away than the normal workplace.

Paul Greenberg employs 25 at his office and warehouse for his website's auctionbroker.com.au

and dealsdirect.com.au, and also pays above-award wages.

"We pay extra to get good people," Greenberg says. "We pay for performance. A different industrial relations system wouldn't make any difference."

"It wouldn't affect what we pay. We expect productivity and it comes."

And the unfair dismissal laws are "irrelevant" since "good management beats regulations or deregulation every time".

"Be a human before a manager is my advice," he says.