AUSTRALIAN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS LAW AND SYSTEMS:
AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT
One time the place of the federal tribunal seemed 'incontestable'. After examining the origins, form and function of the federal tribunal throughout its hundred-year period of operation we now return to this question of the contested nature of arbitration and the contemporary place of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) in modern Australia. As this research has observed an analysis of the recent history of the AIRC, Yet this analysis needs to be considered in the broader context of the one-hundred-year history of the tribunal. As we have seen, the nature of arbitration and the role of the court/tribunal have been hotly contested throughout its institutional life. From its difficult birth, the Arbitration Court occasionally attracted controversy while governments of both political persuasions have frequently changed the rules under which arbitration and the tribunals operate. We have also seen that from time to time that employers and unions have challenged the legitimacy of the tribunal typically, when economic circumstances have influenced them to do so. At other times, both industrial parties have sought the tribunal's protection, though never usually at the same time. This alone may provide some measure of its independence and utility throughout its history.

KEYWORDS: Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC), economic, federal tribunal.