

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Crossbench senators should govern in the interests of the entire nation or face the polls

*AMMA – Australian Mines and Metals Association  
The nation's resource industry employer group*

THE Prime Minister recalling parliament to debate the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) and a new Registered Organisations Commission has sent a clear message to obstructionist crossbench senators that if they can't govern in the interests of the entire nation, they should find themselves subject to the will of the people at the next election.

AMMA chief executive Steve Knott says 'it should be of little surprise' that the government has threatened a double dissolution election over its mandate on the ABCC and Registered Organisation bills, which have been repeatedly rejected by an intransigent senate since 2013.

"It should be noted that Malcolm Turnbull, as Opposition Leader in 2008, did not oppose the ALP's workplace relations laws on the principle that the people of Australia delivered their judgment of that policy at the 2007 Election," Mr Knott says.

"It is not unreasonable for the Prime Minister to now seek an end to more than two years of political pantomime and self-interested rejection of these two bills, which were key elements of the Coalition's workplace relations policies released before the 2013 Federal Election.

"The fate of this legislation, along with that of many of the senators, is now in their own hands. It should not be a big call for the crossbench senators to support important legislation that was part of the Coalition's election mandate and has since had a multitude of economic, industrial and criminal evidence to support its reintroduction."

AMMA has long advocated for the importance of the ABCC and the need for more rigorous governance standards and penalties for all registered organisations. The peak resources body repeatedly warned the Rudd-Gillard government of the devastating impact to construction sector competition and lawfulness that would come from abolishing the ABCC.

"A strengthened building industry watchdog was specifically recommended by the Cole Royal Commission in 2003 and union conduct in the intervening years, much of it uncovered through the recent Heydon Royal Commission, has only made its case stronger," Mr Knott continues.

"It is not too much to ask participants in the building and construction industry to be subject to the rule of law, just as it is not too much for all registered organisations to play by the same rules as corporations.

"AMMA would be delighted if in the future, the building and construction sector showed such an improvement in its cultures and industrial environment that a case could be made to examine and potentially remove its special compliance and regulatory arrangements.

"However it is clear that at present, with participants in the industry so routinely before the court for bad behaviour, intimidation and coercion, that an effective watchdog like the ABCC is not only warranted but essential to protect and strengthen one of our nation's most critical industries."

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