

MEDIA RELEASE

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Government must appoint new FWC members and two-thirds should be women

AMMA – Australia's national resource industry employer group

RESOURCE industry employers, through their national representative group AMMA, call on the Turnbull Government to urgently make new appointments to the Fair Work Commission (FWC) and to seize the opportunity to appoint more women to improve the gender balance on the national employment tribunal.

"The FWC is four members smaller than when Labor left office and further retirements are expected. The need to appoint new members is pressing," says AMMA CEO Steve Knott.

"Further appointments can bring the FWC into the 21st Century on gender balance. While the Turnbull Government is reportedly working towards 50% of public sector positions being held by women, the FWC is lagging well behind with two in every three positions held by men.

"[AMMA's analysis](#) of the composition of the FWC shows just 29% at the senior or presidential level are women. With women constituting 46% of Australia's almost two million employees, this is a striking and unacceptable imbalance.

"Minister Cash is on the right track, with three of her four recent FWC appointees being women. However with much more to still be done, the government should pursue a broad target of two female appointees to each male until such time as the FWC has at least 40% female members."

AMMA's [survey](#) of resource industry employers this week revealed that almost 9-in-10 employers believe the structure and approach of the FWC must be urgently reviewed.

Many resource employers are seeing costly delays to some proceedings, while Mr Knott also says having public servants undertake conciliation of dismissal claims is 'an unacceptable shirking of one of the FWC's fundamental responsibilities'.

"Substituting public servant conciliators for proper tribunal members is not working, with many having little or no private sector experience and some retaining active links to the ALP and unions. 95% of employers surveyed continue to be concerned at having to pay 'go away' money to settle unfair dismissal claims - even where they lack merit," he continues.

"Additional fully fledged FWC members should have the experience and authority to resolve more matters on their merits. The role of conciliation must be returned to appropriately qualified tribunal members.

"With former union figures dominating the FWC, constituting 40% of current members, clearly there is a need for more appointees to have real, practical experience in running complex businesses and managing both small and large workforces.

"Australia's resource industry calls on the Turnbull Government to not delay in making further appointments to the FWC, and to ensure those appointments better represent the diversity of skills, experience and gender across the broader community."

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