

# MEDIA RELEASE

6 May, 2016

## Opposition's hypocrisy on FWC appointments breathtaking

*AMMA – Australia's resource industry employer group*

AFTER spending its six years in government stacking the Fair Work Commission (FWC) with ex-union officials into highly paid, highly influential positions, the Federal Opposition's workplace relations spokesperson Brendan O'Connor has today demonstrated breathtaking hypocrisy in questioning the government's appointment of a new tribunal member.

"The former Rudd-Gillard-Rudd government, which included Bill Shorten as workplace relations minister, undertook the most incredibly politicised stacking of the national employment tribunal since Federation," says AMMA chief executive Steve Knott.

"In just six years of government the Labor Party made 26 appointments to the Fair Work Commission of which 18 were aligned with the ALP or had trade union backgrounds. Further, it took the unprecedented step of parachuting two new Vice Presidents of its choosing to sit above two longstanding Howard-era appointees.

"Today's questioning of the appointment of a new FWC member, particularly when the appointee is acknowledged as being well credentialed with actual business and legal experience, is both sad and wondrous.

"Our national employment tribunal remains grossly overweight with ex-union officials and appointees with limited to no real life experience in running a business. It is in the best interests of employers, employees and all industrial participants to inject much needed balance and diversity to the Fair Work Tribunal as soon as possible.

"Employment Minister Michaelia Cash's most recent appointments, including well qualified women with business experience, are a welcome step towards this objective."

AMMA also notes the Opposition's assertion that the FWC cannot afford new members is erroneous and politically motivated. When looking at its operations it is clear the FWC is short on appropriately qualified tribunal members, not funds.

"Prior to yesterday's appointment, the FWC had four less members than when Labor left office," Mr Knott continues.

"Further, with individual dispute claims increasing over the previous two years, the outsourcing of such critical functions to underqualified public sector employees is a concern. The FWC could easily deliver an efficiency dividend to Australian taxpayers by returning this work to tribunal members.

"We urge the government to ignore Labor's hypocrisy and politicking and appoint further merit-based, appropriately-qualified FWC members to help meet the tribunal's increasing workload."

AMMA yesterday issued a [statement](#) welcoming the appointment of Lyndall Dean as a Deputy President of the FWC.

Click [here](#) for an analysis of the FWC's current composition (prior to Dean's appointment), which shows the Coalition is slowly addressing demographic and structural imbalances on the tribunal.

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