

MEDIA RELEASE

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ABCC's new jurisdiction will help deliver \$255bn in resource investment

AMMA – Australian Mines and Metals Association

THE additional reach of the restored Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) to address militant and unlawful industrial tactics in the offshore resources sector and related supply chains, will provide a massive boost to Australia's prospects of securing \$255bn worth of resources investment still under consideration for our shores.

For as long as the federal Coalition, both in opposition and government, has been seeking to restore the ABCC to address escalating union militancy, Australia's resource industry employer group AMMA has lobbied for its extension to offshore resource construction.

"We asked for it, the government saw merit in our proposal, and has now delivered it with the support of the Senate crossbench," says AMMA chief executive Steve Knott.

"While much of the community's concern in recent years has related to high profile CFMEU thuggery on CBD building sites, there have been escalating strategies by militant unions to hold multi-billion dollar offshore resources projects to ransom for their own agendas.

"The Maritime Union of Australia was recently found by the Federal Court to have used safety as a pretext to take illegal strike action against Chevron's Gorgon LNG project, reportedly costing the project up to \$20 million. Upon being ordered to return to work, there are credible claims the union then used 'go slow tactics' to further disrupt the project.

"During the construction of Woodside's Pluto LNG Project, more than 100 workers defied an order from the industrial tribunal and walked off the job, before later being ordered to pay over \$1 million in total fines. Pluto LNG was also subject to further illegal strikes by members of the CFMEU, CEPU and AMWU, resulting in further fines.

"This type of industrial extortion may be out-of-sight to the average Australian, but it still hurts our economy and erodes job opportunities. In the past two years alone, more than \$160bn of potential major resources and energy projects have failed to proceed.

"By extending the new ABCC's jurisdiction to offshore resource construction, Australia has sent a signal to the international investment community that we are open for business and want their job-creating capital to come to this country, not our competitors."

Michaelia Cash's workplace reforms in the national interest:

AMMA is unsurprised that the Labor / Greens / Jacqui Lambie alliance fought against the return of the ABCC to the last moment, given Opposition Leader Bill Shorten's history of condoning the militant and combative tactics of Australia's most extreme unionists, with no regard to the harm created to industry and Australia's reputation.

Infamously, Mr Shorten told the MUA's National Conference in 2013 that he wished he could "bottle the spirit" of the militant unionists at the event, just one day after West Australian secretary Chris Cain told members "laws need to be broken, you're going to get locked up".

"Bill Shorten may have declared he is proud to walk 'side by side' with industrial law breakers, but thankfully the majority of Australian Senators have acted in the national interest and said 'no more, not under our watch'," Mr Knott continues.

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"We congratulate the Turnbull Government and those who voted in support of the ABCC legislation, for taking a stand against union militancy and the damage it causes our economy.

"AMMA particularly applauds Minister for Employment Michaelia Cash for her recent workplace relations legislative victories. It hasn't gone unnoticed that the minister has been subjected to juvenile, borderline sexist comments from ALP Senators during the past week.

"It is a credit to Senator Cash, also Minister for Women, that she ignored such bile and got on with turning Coalition pre-election workplace relations policies into law. Based on these results Senator Cash is clearly one of Malcolm Turnbull's most effective Cabinet Ministers.

"With the ABCC and Registered Organisations changes now passed, another issue critical to our industry is ensuring the proposed merger of Australia's two most militant unions, the CFMEU and MUA, is subject to a test against the public interest, as a comparable corporate merger would be.

"Given the deplorable conduct of these unions and their unparalleled record of breaching Australia's workplace laws, their merger would be very unlikely to pass such a test until they could demonstrate compliance with Australia's workplace laws over a sustained period.

"Once these matters of union compliance, transparency and lawfulness are dealt with, as a nation we can move on to the type of fundamental workplace relations reform that will create jobs and build the strength of our economy, starting with the recommendations the Productivity Commission handed down some 12 months ago."

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