

# MEDIA STATEMENT

8 February 2017

## **Australian taxpayers should no longer cop the bill for construction lawlessness**

*AMMA – Australia's Resource Industry Employer Group*

*Statement by Steve Knott AM, Chief Executive*

THE proposed toughening of the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) legislation is not only a massive win for Australia's construction sector, but critical to ensuring more responsible use of taxpayer dollars for building schools, hospitals, roads and other community infrastructure.

Australia's gross Commonwealth debt is hurtling toward \$500 billion and our nation is struggling to attract private sector investment with an uncompetitive corporate tax rate, excessive government red tape and a workplace relations system stuck in the 1970s.

More than two decades of Royal Commissions, inquiries and investigations have shown our nation's cost of construction is stratospheric and a major contributing factor is the sector's high level of criminality, intimidation, lawlessness and coercion, routinely reported in our courts and media.

Australia can no longer afford to kowtow to the CFMEU and other extreme left-wing unions who continually break Australia's workplace laws, pressure firms into unproductive workplace deals and drive up the costs of construction in our country.

Having the new Building Code in full effect as soon as possible will provide all building companies with a legal and commercial basis to resist the 'blowtorch to the feet' type of pressure often favoured by the most militant unions in the construction industry.

It is the job of all elected parliamentarians to act in the national interest; to call out that behaviour, put an end to it and ensure it's not repeated. It's also the job of our elected representatives to act in the national interest and to ensure every cent of taxpayer dollar is spent responsibly.

By supporting the amendments proposed today, the parliament will marry what is lawful and acceptable in the construction industry with what is best for the taxpayer and best for the nation.

While many of our parliamentarians are seeing sense, it is a disgrace in the light of such overwhelming evidence that those within the ALP-Greens-Jacqui Lambie Alliance continue to put the priorities of their preferred vested interest groups and financial backers over the national interest.

By opposing the amendments, they effectively condone a long pattern of illegal, coercive and intimidatory behaviour in the construction sector, ultimately paid for by the Australian taxpayer.

In contrast, we welcome the recent decision of Senator Derryn Hinch and prior commitments by Senator David Leyonhjelm, One Nation Senators and the Nick Xenophon Team to support this legislation and a more effective transitional time for the Building Code.

It is encouraging to see this group of Crossbench Senators choosing to do what's right for the nation.

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