



# Business backing for O'Dwyer as industrial relations policy returns to centre stage

## EMPLOYMENT

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Employers hope the appointment of Kelly O'Dwyer as minister for jobs, industrial relations and women, and the return of the industrial relations portfolio to cabinet, will result in more prominent workplace relations policy in

the lead-up to the federal election.

Construction, manufacturing and mining employers welcomed the appointment of Ms O'Dwyer, who replaces Michaelia Cash as jobs minister.

Senator Cash has been appointed minister for small and family business, skills and vocational education.

Former small and family business, workplace and deregulation minister Craig Laundy, a prominent supporter of Malcolm Turn-

bull, has gone to the backbench and is considering whether to leave parliament. He said yesterday he declined an offer by Mr Morrison to stay in the ministry.

"I have not taken this decision lightly, but the significant chal-

lenges we faced last week took a massive toll, both emotionally and physically, hence my decision to take a step back, and consider what my future holds," he said.

Master Builders Australia chief executive Denita Wawn welcomed the return of the industrial relations and small-business portfolios to cabinet.

Steve Knott, chief executive of the Australian Mines and Metals Association, said Ms O'Dwyer was a talented and capable minister, well known and highly regarded by the AMMA and its members.

"She will be an excellent minister in her new portfolio which, sig-

nificantly, has elevated industrial relations back to its rightful place as a senior cabinet role," he said. "Meaningful industrial relations reform has been one of the great drivers of Australia's prosperity over the past 30 years."

Referring to recent comments by former prime minister John Howard that workplace relations policy was "unfinished business", Mr Knott said "AMMA and our members hope to see industrial re-

lations form a significant part of

the national policy debate leading up to the next federal election".

Ms O'Dwyer said yesterday she would focus on both workers and the unemployed in her role as jobs minister.

"Our government believes the best form of welfare is providing every Australian with the chance to get a job," she said. "I want to help create opportunities for all Australians to work regardless of

where they live and what qualifications they have so that those who want a job can get a job. This means jobs not just in the cities but also in our vital regions."

Australian Industry Group chief executive Innes Willox said he looked forward to working with Ms O'Dwyer: "There are important bills before the parliament, as well as some problematic recent court rulings, that require the early attention of the new minister."