

13 June 2019

46th Parliament must support the Ensuring Integrity Bill

AUSTRALIAN Resources and Energy Group AMMA welcomes the Morrison Government's commitment to ensuring greater compliance and lawfulness among all registered organisations, and will urge the 46th Parliament of Australia to pass legislation giving effect to these important measures.

AMMA and our members have long backed the measures within the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2017*, and have restated our strong support to new Minister for Industrial Relations Christian Porter.

The changes brought about by the "Ensuring Integrity Bill" are necessary to disincentivise law-breaking and remove recidivist offenders from holding positions of office within Australian registered organisations, including both trade unions and registered employer groups.

Specifically, the Ensuring Integrity Bill would:

1. introduce a public interest test for amalgamations of registered organisations
2. allow for automatic disqualification of registered organisations for "serious criminal offences"
3. establish an offence for a disqualified person to continue to act as an official
4. allow the Federal Court to:
 - i. prohibit officials from holding office if not "fit and proper persons"
 - ii. cancel the registration of an organisation
 - iii. hear applications for a range of other orders
 - iv. order remedial action to deal with governance issues
 - v. appoint an administrator to an organisation

"These measures are common-sense, uncontroversial and necessary to protect members of trade unions and employer bodies from unlawful activities," said AMMA Chief Executive Steve Knott.

"Insidious cultures and activities, including those uncovered by the Heydon Royal Commission, highlight the need for greater rigor in ensuring registered organisations and their officials comply with the law.

"Holding office in an Australian registered organisation is a privilege. The Ensuring Integrity Bill only poses an issue for unions, employer groups and officials of such organisations who abuse this privilege, break the law and betray the trust of their members.

"AMMA is hopeful that the 46th Parliament of Australia, including the new Senate Crossbench, will take a sensible approach to reforms; reforms intended to protect everyday Australians from corruption and unlawfulness by those they entrust to represent their interests."

MEDIA CONTACT: Brad Thompson, 0409 781 580