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LABOR'S VICTORY

Unions and business lay out priorities for Albanese

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Australia's union movement and the major business groups have staked out their priorities for the incoming federal government, with skills shortages and the spectre of an old battle over industrial law emerging as the two main themes.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), having spent a decade out of favour with Coalition governments in Canberra, has hailed Labor's victory and put forward minimum wage, the abolition of union watchdogs and better job security as key priorities for the Albanese government. Meanwhile, the business groups have urged the government to act swiftly on tackling skills shortages.

ACTU secretary Sally McManus said Labor had been clear that any increase to the minimum wage, which will be decided by an independent Fair Work Commission panel in the middle of the year, below the 5.1 per cent inflation rate was a wage cut.

"That's not something that a government that supports working people would want to see," McManus said.

The new Labor government has until early June to put in a new submission to the minimum wage case.

Labor will hold a jobs summit

bringing together unions and employers, which groups such as the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) said they were eager to attend.

"The first priority must be ending the most acute labour and skill shortages in 48 years. Small businesses cannot afford for the next federal government to drag its heels on growing Australia's workforce," said ACCI boss, Andrew McKellar.

The Australian Retailers Association and the Australian Resources and Energy Employer Association (AREEA) have also made clear that skills are a priority for their members.

Ai Group chief Innes Willox, whose association represents many manufacturing, gig economy and other businesses, said productivity improvements were a shared objective of businesses and a Labor government and pledged to work with government on that topic and climate.

"The government has a clear mandate to bring an end to the damaging 'climate wars' and to concentrate on giving coherence and momentum to the substantial transitions Australia must manage to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions to net zero," Willox said.

A looming flashpoint is Labor's promise to abolish the Australian

Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), which has successfully sued the CFMEU dozens of times in recent years for disobeying industrial laws.

McManus has championed Labor's pledge, saying the commission "suppressed working people" and contributed to low wage growth. A CFMEU spokesman the union welcomed Labor's victory under Albanese and said the party had a clear mandate to abolish the ABCC.

Steve Knott, chief executive of the AREEA, said his organisation accepted the ALP's mandate to abolish the commission, of which it has been a strong supporter. The ABCC was created under John Howard in 2005, abolished by Labor, and then resurrected by the Coalition under Malcolm Turnbull in 2016 after he called a double dissolution election to get it through Parliament.