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Skills crunch tops resource employers' political agenda

The Australian Resources and Energy Employer Association (AREEA) has highlighted the issue of skills shortages across the sector as it congratulates Labor on winning the 2022 Federal Election.

"Resources and energy employers welcome the political stability resulting from the Australian Labor Party forming majority government, as it looks set to achieve," chief executive Steve Knott said.

"With the election behind us, AREEA looks forward to working with the new Australian Government on the various opportunities and challenges ahead for our nation's resources and energy industry, as we have done effectively with all governments over the past 104 years.

"Overwhelmingly, the biggest issue at present is the current and emerging skills shortages in the sector. This is expected to worsen with investment in new and expansion projects potentially creating 100,000 new roles over the next five-to-seven years.

"Accordingly, AREEA both welcomes and will be an active participant in the ALP's planned skills and employment summit."

On industrial relations matters. Mr Knott said the association would seek to work with the ALP on the practical implementation of its IR mandate as well as further positive changes to the system.

"For many years, AREEA has been in regular dialogue with the ALP over the merits of "Project Life Greenfields Agreements", meaning agreements with terms of up to six years to apply to mega resources and energy sector projects. As detailed in [correspondence](#) to the Opposition Leader last week, such agreements would have guaranteed wages increases and union involvement," he said.

"AREEA also notes and accepts the ALP's mandate to abolish the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), a body we have been a strong supporter of given the ongoing recidivist lawbreaking of the CFMMEU.

"AREEA will therefore encourage the ALP to set up a specialist division within the Fair Work Ombudsman to investigate and prosecute any employer or union organisation that breaches Australia's workplace laws, with a high level of attention still required on the building and construction sector."