



AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

MEDIA RELEASE

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ABOLISHING BUILDING INDUSTRY IR REGULATOR 'RISKY AND RECKLESS'

Statement by Mr Peter Anderson, Chief Executive

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), Australia's largest and most representative business organisation, says that support for the abolition of the current industrial relations regulator in the building and construction industry by government and Australian Green senators in a Senate Committee report tabled today, is risky and reckless.

"The Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) is a powerful regulator, and that is exactly what is needed in an industry with powerful union and commercial forces. Many small tradies and contractors rely on the ABCC to make sure that their commercial and industrial freedom is not compromised behind the hoardings of major building sites.

"In an industry where, for a generation, courts, tribunals and governments of both political persuasions struggled to rein in coercive industrial relations conduct, the ABCC has been a transforming force. Behaviour on many sites has changed, but both the regulator and the industry have warned that change to culture is not durable without this strong IR cop on the beat.

"Given that the building and construction industry represents almost 10% of Australia's GDP, and the important role new infrastructure will have in our economic recovery, the responsible approach is to not abolish the ABCC. No matter how benign the intention, trying to morph aspects of the ABCC into Fair Work Australia sends a misguided signal to the industry and its unions that changed approaches have official sanction.

"Coalition senators have today correctly said that the work of the ABCC is not yet complete. This conclusion, supported by the facts and the regulator's own evidence, should persuade crossbench senators to retain the ABCC in its current form."

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ACCI represents over 350,000 businesses in every State and Territory and all industries. Our network employs around 4 million employees, ranging from the top 100 companies to tens of thousands of small and medium businesses.

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