

media release



MASTERS OF OUR INDUSTRY

Master Builders Association of Victoria
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When will we see the small print?

The ALP has again missed an opportunity to provide important detail on how the building industry watchdog, the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC), will operate under a Labor government.

“Today’s Industrial Relations debate between Minister Hockey, and Shadow Minister Gillard, was the perfect opportunity for the building industry to learn exactly how this new system will operate if Labor wins power,” said Master Builders Executive Director, Brian Welch.

“Unfortunately, we got rhetoric, but no fine print from Ms Gillard,” he said.

“The powers, structure, staffing levels, skills and funding of the ABCC post-2010 are still not known, and today was a missed opportunity to resolve those unknowns,” Mr Welch said.

Master Builders has been running an information campaign in newspapers and on radio in the lead-up to the election promoting the benefits of the ABCC, and the importance of its retention.

Mr Welch said the ABCC has been responsible for a dramatic improvement in industrial relations on Australian building sites. Productivity has risen and costs have fallen. In September 2006, working days lost per 1000 employees due to IR disputes was 1.6 days (a record low) and costs relating to IR disputes, such as lost productivity, plummeted over 85 per cent (\$240 million) last year.

In only two years, the ABCC has:

- Slashed industrial disputes to record lows,
- Improved overall productivity,
- Increased real wages for workers; and,
- Reduced unlawful behaviour

“The whole landscape has changed, Mr Welch said, “and it is in Australia’s interests that it stays that way.

“The admission yesterday by the CFMEU’s Western Australia secretary, Kevin Reynolds that the union expected some gain from its \$400,000 donation to the ALP is proof that the unions are determined to regain what they lost when the ABCC came into existence,” he said.

Master Builders will continue to urge the ALP to release more policy detail and retain the ABCC permanently in the interests of all building industry participants.

For more information on the Master Builder campaign, go to www.mbav.com.au/saveabcc

Ends

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