

media release



MASTERS OF OUR INDUSTRY

Master Builders Association of Victoria
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Master Builders laments the loss of the 'strong cop on the beat'

The Master Builders Association of Victoria has warned that a return to the 'bad old days' on building and construction sites is nigh following the imminent abolition of the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC).

The House of Representatives this morning passed the Federal Government's construction industrial relations bill, effectively abolishing the ABCC. An amendment was also made that will stop the new Fair Work Building Industry Inspectorate from prosecuting after matters have been settled or discontinued.

Master Builders Executive Director Brian Welch said it was a sad day for the Victorian building industry and makes a mockery of the goal of keeping 'a strong cop on the beat.'

"We lobbied to retain the ABCC to continue improving productivity and harmony on Victoria's commercial building sites. Disbanding the 'strong cop on the beat' will have a detrimental effect on productivity and workplace harmony in our industry," Mr Welch said.

"These proposed laws will handcuff the new Inspectorate, which will be prohibited from pursuing unlawful conduct during industrial disputes as soon as the dispute has ended.

"Sadly unlawful industrial behaviour still persists in the Victorian commercial building industry and cannot be condoned or accepted as normal. Victoria is the most vulnerable in this arena and stands to lose the most now that this Bill has been passed.

"We will now have nothing but a toothless tiger to tame the renegades in our industry. This Bill will benefit no-one but the militant unions like the CFMEU at the expense of everyone else.

"In uncertain economic times like this, these laws could have a dramatic and long-lasting effect on the Victorian economy and lead to significant delays and cost overruns on major projects."

FAST FACTS

- The ABCC's Annual Report showed that during the last financial year, courts imposed more than \$2.5 million in penalties for illegal workplace actions, two thirds of which was for the unacceptable practice of coercion.
- In Victoria, almost 90 per cent of all fines have been imposed against just one building industry participant - the Victorian Construction and General Division of the CFMEU.

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