



The Hon Jarrod Bleijie MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

In reply please quote: 2387301

25 NOV 2013

Senator Bridget McKenzie
Chair
Senate Standing Legislation Committee
on Education and Employment
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Dear Senator McKenzie

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jarrod Bleijie', written over the name 'Senator McKenzie'.

I refer to your email dated 15 November 2013 to the Honourable Campbell Newman MP, Premier regarding the Senate Standing Legislation Committee on Education and Employment's inquiry into the Building and Construction Industry (Improving Productivity) Bill 2013 (IP Bill) and the Building and Construction Industry (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2013 (CTP Bill). The Premier has referred your email to me for response.

While the timeframes prohibit a thorough analysis of the bills and a detailed submission, I would like to take this opportunity to provide support for the bills.

The building and construction industry is one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy. Unlocking activity in Queensland's construction sector to create jobs and investment is crucial to Queensland's economic recovery.

The abolition of the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) in 2012 by the former federal Government has resulted in a resurgence of intimidation and unlawful behaviour in the industry. Master Builders Association Queensland and Australian Mines and Metals Association have said in a joint statement that Queensland's commercial sector building and construction industry has, since the abolition of the ABCC, experienced one of the most difficult periods of unlawful industrial conduct in its history.

In 2012, the Queensland Children's Hospital project was at a standstill for more than 60 days due to unprotected industrial action. The issue of lost time due to illegal strikes highlighted the flaws in the national industrial relations system which allowed the stoppage to continue even after Fair Work Australia had made four orders relating to a return to work.

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In order to address these issues on State Government funded projects and following consultation with and strong support from industry, the Queensland Government introduced Implementation Guidelines to the Queensland Code of Practice for the Building and Construction Industry (the Guidelines) on 1 July 2013. The Queensland Building and Construction Compliance Branch (BCCB) was established on that same day.

The BCCB has been actively involved in the tendering process of government agencies for projects coming on line since July 2013. As at 20 November 2013, there is \$1.3 billion worth of construction projects covered by the Guidelines in Queensland.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring value for money for Queensland taxpayers by ensuring its projects are not disrupted or delayed by unlawful industrial action or held to ransom by the activities of militant unions. Private sector projects deserve and require the same protections. That is why the reestablishment of the ABCC is vitally important.

The Queensland Government supports the federal Government's action to bring back a strong and effective national construction code and guidelines, backed by the ABCC. It is critical that the ABCC has appropriate powers to allow it to address illegal workplace practices and the intimidation and coercion occurring on building sites which is undermining productivity in the Queensland construction industry.

The Queensland Government supports the passage of the IP Bill and the CTP Bill.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

JARROD BLEIJIE MP

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice