

LABOR SENATORS ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1.1 Labor Senators of the Senate Education and Employment Committee (committee) raise concerns on the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Legislation Amendment (Exit Arrangements) Bill 2015* (the bill).

1.2 Whilst Labor Senators support legislation to ensure that an exiting employer does not leave the Comcare scheme without contributing an appropriate amount to cover any current or prospective liabilities that are not funded by premiums the employer has paid before exit, we must also ensure that no workers will be worse off under the bill, and that the passage of this bill will not provide an incentive for employers to disadvantage workers.

1.3 We note that the reason for referring this bill to the committee was to ensure a thorough investigation of the bill, and allow sufficient time to consider the bill. However, since the bill was referred to the committee the government introduced a third substantive bill relating to Comcare, the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Amendment (Improving the Comcare Scheme) Bill 2015*. Given the introduction of said bill, we do not believe that the circumstances of the inquiry into the bill now meet these criteria, and the opportunity for more thorough investigation of the interaction of the bill with other bills relating to Comcare hasn't been afforded to the committee.

1.4 The ACT government is in the process of consulting about the workings of any new scheme. It does not yet have a designed scheme and it will not for some time. Therefore, the expedition of the government's bill is unnecessary.

1.5 Labor Senators were not convinced by the Department of Employment's submission that the passage of the bill would not result in a reduced premium pool in state workers' compensation systems, concerns raised by the ETU and the Victorian Government.¹

1.6 As such, Labor Senators urge the government to request the ACT government provides written assurances to ensure workers will not be worse off.

Senator Sue Lines
Deputy Chair

¹ Electrical Trades Union of Australia, *Submission 1*, p.6; Victorian Government, *Submission 3*, p.2.

