

28 November 2019

More to industrial relations reform than Ensuring Integrity

AUSTRALIAN Resources and Energy Group AMMA is disappointed the Morrison Government's Ensuring Integrity laws failed to secure majority support in the Senate today.

"Contrary to the misrepresentations of the Federal Opposition, the Ensuring Integrity Bill would simply have promoted compliance with Australia's workplace laws and acted as a deterrent to the recidivist law-breaking of a minority group of union officials," Steve Knott, Chief Executive of Australian Resources and Energy Group AMMA.

"These are important measures that would have considerably improved our nation's industrial relations environment and lowered the exorbitant cost of public infrastructure projects borne by the taxpayer.

"The fact this legislation passed the lower house in 2017 and 2019 only to fall short today, shows the difficulty in negotiating important economic and industrial relations reform through the Senate crossbench.

"We are encouraged by the Attorney General and Minister for Industrial Relations Christian Porter's comments including that the Government will seek to reintroduce this Bill when the time is appropriate.

"This is also an opportunity for those law-breaking elements of the union movement to consider the impact their behaviour has on the general community. All the business community has ever asked of them is to comply with the law as all members of a civil society are expected to do."

Despite today's outcome, AMMA encourages the Morrison Government to continue its pursuit of other important industrial relations reforms.

"The Morrison Government has begun a broadly consultative process on a number of industrial relations reforms that would significantly benefit the Australian economy, create jobs and grow wages," Mr Knott said.

"One such area is project life agreements for major resources and energy projects, a reform which would assist in securing multi-billions of dollars in investment capital in Australia. This long overdue reform should have bipartisan support based on the Federal Opposition's comments shortly before the election.

"Other urgent priorities include fixing enterprise bargaining, reducing the complexity of Australia's industrial awards system and addressing issues with dismissal and general protection laws.

"While the Ensuring Integrity measures are extremely important, it is also encouraging to see the Government recognise there is more work to be done on industrial relations reform than union compliance.

"We trust the Senate Crossbench will assess and vote on future reforms on their individual merits and not be unduly influenced by vested interest misinformation campaigns."

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