

Friday 24 August 2007

## Reforms create “just a different world” in construction industry

Statement by Heather Ridout  
Chief Executive, Australian Industry Group

“Two reports released today by the Australian Constructors Association (ACA) highlight that the reforms which followed the Building and Construction Industry Royal Commission have created “just a different world” in the industry,” Australian Industry Group Chief Executive Heather Ridout said today.

“The reports, *The Economic Importance of the Construction Industry in Australia*, and a qualitative survey of people working in the construction industry, *Four Years On*, were released in Sydney today.

“They present a picture of a transformation for the better in the industry, but also show that the changes are yet to be fully entrenched and if wound back there is a high risk of a return to the bad old days,” Mrs Ridout said.

“They show that the reforms have created a hugely improved and more positive and productive workplace environment. The benefits are manifold, including safer workplaces and better pay.

“It is clear that the Australian Building and Construction Commissioner (ABCC) has made an important contribution to the change in the industry. Even though the ABCC has been tough on both employers and unions there is an acknowledgement that it has made a very positive impact and has been a key part of the transformation of the industry.

“The *Four Years On* report also shows that Collective Agreements remain the mainstream industrial arrangement for the industry.

“The reforms that have supported the big improvements in the industry are made up of five pillars:

- (1) *Building and Construction Industry Improvement Act*,
- (2) Australian Building and Construction Commissioner,
- (3) Federal Safety Commissioner,
- (4) National Code of Practice and Implementation Guidelines, and
- (5) Anti-pattern bargaining laws, right of entry provisions and other elements of the WorkChoices legislation.

“The Federal Opposition’s decision to continue with the ABCC arrangements until January 2010 and to retain the office of the Federal Safety Commission is a positive move which has our strong support.

“We urge the Opposition to support the remainder of the above five pillars and to fully resource those which they have already committed to. This is necessary to lock in the vast improvement in the industrial culture in the industry.”

**For a copy of the reports:** <http://www.constructors.com.au/main/>

**Further Comment:**

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