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Senate Education and Employment Committees  
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22 November 2013

Dear Secretary

### **RE: Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Bill 2013**

The Master Plumbers' and Mechanical Services Association of Australia welcomes the opportunity to make submissions on the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Bill 2013* ("Bill").

#### **1. In-principle support for the objectives of the Bill**

The Master Plumbers' recognises and gives in-principle support to the Government's commitment to:

- increase the financial and accountability obligations of registered organisations and their office holders; and
- strengthen investigative powers and enhance remedies under the RO Act.

particularly in the wake of the recent exposure and investigation of governance problems relating to employee registered organisations.

#### **2. Further consultation period requested**

Notwithstanding, we submit that due to the extremely limited timeframe and the limited resources of a small organisation, the Master Plumbers' has had insufficient time to properly consider the technical detail, implementation or impact. We urge the Committee to delay the progress of this Bill until such matters may be properly considered, addressed and resolved.





For your further consideration, as a result of the subsequent changes to the Act, the Master Plumbers and other registered organisations have been required to make a number of changes to Rules of the organisation. This process was significantly exacerbated by:

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- insufficient timeframes (having consideration to the complexity of the Rules); and
- unpreparedness (including delayed/limited/vague support and assistance) and limited resources of the (then) Fair Work Australia.

We confirm that, 6 months after lodgement of our application for alteration of Rules (for compliance with the Act) this matter has only now reached a resolution stage.

### 3. Intention of the Bill

It is our further understanding that the Bill is intended to:

- establish an independent watchdog, the Registered Organisations Commission, to monitor and regulate registered organisations with enhanced investigation and information gathering powers;
- amend the requirements on officers' disclosure of material personal interests (and related voting and decision making rights) and change grounds for disqualification and ineligibility for office;
- strengthen existing financial accounting, disclosure and transparency obligations under the Act by putting certain rule obligations on the face of the Act and making them enforceable as civil remedy provisions; and
- increase civil penalties and introduce criminal offences for serious breaches of officers' duties as well as new offences in relation to the conduct of investigations under the Act.

Yours faithfully

Ken Gardner  
*Secretary*  
*Master Plumbers' and Mechanical Services Association of Association*

