



By email: ewwr.sen@aph.gov.au

Committee Secretary
Senate Education and Employment Committees
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

November 21, 2013

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment Bill 2013

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission in relation to the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment Bill 2013 (Bill) on behalf of the Timber Merchants Association of Victoria (TMA V).

During 2013, registered organisations have had to undertake significant changes in compliance requirements; while a number of registered organisations are large enough to devote significant resources to compliance, many employer organisations are significantly smaller and simply do not have the resources to devote to complex compliance regulations.

Over the past 6 months the TMA undertook to comply with changes to its constitution as a result of legislative change, and while we have worked to fulfil the requirements it has been done at a cost in both time and money to the association. One of the difficulties confronting the TMA during this exercise was that the Fair Work Commission did not distribute the model rules until quite late in the process. This put further stress on a small registered organisation with limited resources to proceed without waiting for guidance.

We support strong financial accounting disclosure and transparency obligations as we are cognisant of the fact that registered organisations run on members' money, and proper accounting for those monies is critical. We also support the requirements that officers of registered organisations declare personal financial and other interests when undertaking an official role within a registered organisation.

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Consequently it is the view of the TMA that the establishment of an independent authority to monitor and regulate registered organisations is unnecessary; we believe that the Fair Work Commission is an appropriate body to undertake this role, but will require appropriate resources, including appropriately trained personnel, to satisfy legitimate community expectations that registered organisations be managed with integrity.

We question the need for creating a new bureaucracy in the form of the Registered Organisations Commission. In our opinion, either ASIC and/or the General Manager of the Fair Work Commission could be appropriately resourced to effectively carry out these functions. An additional body would be, in our view, a waste of taxpayer resources.

Sincerely,

Eric Siegers
Executive Officer