



**THE HON JULIA GILLARD MP  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**11 JUN 2009**

Mrs Julia Irwin MP  
Chair  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mrs Irwin

Thank you for your letter of 8 May 2009, in which you referred three petitions calling for the abolition of the Office of the Australian Building and Construction Commissioner (ABCC) and regulatory arrangements for the building and construction industry.

The Australian Government will ensure there is always appropriate regulation for Australia's building and construction industry to ensure lawful conduct by all parties in the industry.

The Government's *Forward with Fairness Policy Implementation Plan* includes a number of commitments in relation to Australia's building and construction industry, including a commitment to retain the ABCC until 31 January 2010. At that time, the Government will replace the ABCC with a specialist building and construction division of the inspectorate of the Government's new independent umpire, Fair Work Australia.

Consistent with our commitments, the Government is undertaking a process of extensive consultation with industry stakeholders to ensure that the transition to those new arrangements will be orderly, effective and robust.

Consultations on the arrangements relating to the new specialist division were conducted by the Hon Murray Wilcox QC, a former Australian Federal Court judge. Mr Wilcox delivered his report to the Government on 31 March 2009 and it was made available to the public on 3 April 2009. The Government and the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council, which comprises federal, state and territory Ministers responsible for workplace relations matters in their respective jurisdictions, are now considering the recommendations. A copy of the report by Mr Wilcox is available at [www.workplace.gov.au/wilcox](http://www.workplace.gov.au/wilcox).

Thank you again for bringing the petitions to my attention.

Yours sincerely,

**Julia Gillard**  
Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations