

Successful first year for ABCC Canberra team

The ABCC's Canberra office is today celebrating one year delivering effective workplace regulation and advice to the ACT's building and construction industry.

The ABCC opened the doors of its Canberra office on Tuesday 22 February 2011 to allow swift regulatory intervention and expand the ABCC's capacity to provide advice and assistance for ACT industry participants.

ABC Commissioner Leigh Johns said the last twelve months have seen the ABCC respond to a number of sham contracting issues in the ACT.

"Two Canberra companies were penalised a total of \$39,500 for engaging in sham contracting," he said.

"The ABCC is currently calling for tenders to conduct research that will uncover the extent of sham contracting in Australia's building and construction industry."

In the time the Canberra office has been open, our ACT inspectors have conducted around 40 site visits within Canberra and the surrounding region, including Batemans Bay, Narooma, Bega, Wagga and Albury.

"The team has received 109 enquiries from local building industry employers and employees, and finalised 68 investigations into issues including non-payment of wages and entitlements, breaches of the Fair Work Act, and freedom of association," said ABC Commissioner Johns.

"A total of \$34,150 was recovered for 17 underpaid employees."

ABC Commissioner Johns said he was impressed that all identified workplace relations breaches by Canberra-based construction businesses had been rectified voluntarily.

"There have been a number of minor technical contraventions which employers have cooperatively rectified. When employers are willing to work with ABC Inspectors and treat the recovery process as a learning experience, all parties benefit" he said.

"Employers in the construction industry can come to the ABCC if they need help understanding their obligations when it comes to record keeping, pay-slip content, and the correct entitlements for staff."

The Canberra-based ABC Inspectors are currently involved in the agency's National Concreting and Finishing Trades Audit, and will continue randomly checking the books of local businesses over the next few months.

Members of the building and construction industry can call the ABCC Hotline on 1800 003 338 or visit www.abcc.gov.au.

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ABCC Canberra office Fast Facts:

Since opening its doors on 22 February 2011, ABC inspectors have:

- Received 109 enquiries
- Initiated 65 investigations
 - o 52 – independent contractors
 - o 8 – wages & entitlements
 - o 4 – other Fair Work Act breaches
 - o 1 – Freedom of Association
- Recovered \$34,156.95 recovered for 17 workers
- Given 14 presentations
- Conducted 37 site visits
- Performed three national code inspections
- Finalised two legal matters finalised – both pertaining to sham contracting
- Undertaken one national code audit