

Media Release

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Australian Government
Office of the Australian Building and
Construction Commissioner

Zero tolerance: violence toward building industry inspectors condemned

ABC Commissioner John Lloyd today said he was reassured to find that the courts will deal with threats and abuse towards his staff.

Recent penalties imposed by the courts highlight the intimidatory behaviour ABCC Inspectors are exposed to.

'A pattern of abusive behaviour directed at inspectors has emerged in Victoria. The conduct is deplorable.' Commissioner Lloyd said.

Mr Lloyd expressed concern for the safety of his staff when visiting construction sites. *'I have a zero-tolerance approach to harassment of my staff. I will seek the full force of the law against those who threaten or abuse inspectors.'*

Last week, the Melbourne Magistrates Court fined a CFMEU shop steward \$300 and placed him on a good behaviour bond for 12 months for abusing two ABCC Inspectors who were attempting to leave a car park connected to a Brookfield Multiplex construction site in Melbourne in August 2008.

As the inspectors were leaving the site a group of construction workers blocked their path on the street. They were then subjected to abuse including from the shop steward, who denied the allegation.

In finding the allegation of indecent language proven against the shop steward, the court accepted that he yelled at the inspectors, "smile for the camera you c*nt" and "get out of the car, you c*nts" as they attempted to depart in their vehicle.

'This kind of conduct would not be tolerated in any other industry, and it will not be tolerated in our industry,' Mr Lloyd said.

A further four incidents involving allegations of abuse towards ABCC staff have been referred to Victorian Police this year.

'Inspectors accept that this is a tough industry, but there is no justification for bullying, threatening, intimidating and assaulting public officials,' Mr Lloyd said.

'It is highly distressing that such dedicated and committed public officials are subjected to this kind of abuse and violence.'

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