

# Defend your rights to be your own boss.

Are you an independent contractor or subbie?  
It's time to defend your rights.

In 2022, 1.1 million people were engaged as independent contractors with over 260,000 of them in the building and construction industry.

Contractors have worked hard to establish their businesses, build strong relationships, and enjoy the freedom to choose how they operate.

But the government is making it harder for independent contractors and self-employed tradies to be their own boss.

New industrial relations laws spell trouble for hundreds of thousands of hardworking Aussies and threaten their ability to perform their jobs effectively, impacting not only them but also the entire nation.



## What is the Government proposing?

In the lead up to the 2022 Federal Election, the Government committed to giving the Fair Work Commission, Australia's national workplace tribunal, new powers to set minimum standards for workers in 'employee-like' forms of work, including the gig economy. Simply put, this will force contractors to be made an employee if they fall under the definition of 'employee-like'.

Master Builders Australia does not support this policy and strongly urges the Government does not proceed with this legislation.

## Who is affected?

The proposed method to implement the Government's 'employee-like' policy has always been expressed in a broad or vague manner such that it leaves the door open to be applied far more broadly and capture a wide range of circumstances outside of the 'gig-economy'. This includes well-established forms of work that are more accurately characterised as small business rather than 'employee-like' including the use of independent contractors and self-employed tradies within the building and construction industry.

**This represents one of the most significant and real attacks on the rights of self-employed and independent contractors.**

If the Government is concerned about new and emerging forms of work available through digital platforms commonly described as 'gig-work' or the 'gig-economy' then it should implement policy that is clearly limited to these types of arrangements and go no further.





## Why is this bad?

It is well understood that many people choose to work as an independent contractor to give them the flexibility and freedom to choose the hours they work, the projects they work, who they work for and negotiate their own fees and conditions.

## How will this hurt the building and construction industry?

The adverse impacts and ramifications for building and construction cannot be understated if the policy is implemented in a manner foreshadowed by the Government. It would fundamentally upend and damage the entire building and construction industry which is founded upon a model of specialist contract work arising from the way in which building work is performed. The industry has already been left in the lurch with the abolition of the ABCC and these provisions also give unions more power to control independent contractors.

## How will this hurt small businesses?

We all know businesses including in the building and construction industry are doing it tough at the moment with high inflation, supply chain disruptions and high interest rates.

These changes introduce more red tape, higher costs and uncertainty for businesses. Many small businesses will simply not be able to employ the independent contractors and subcontractors they engage.

## How will this hurt consumers and the broader community?

It would create a range of negative impacts for the community and consumers and introduce a significant amount of uncertainty that are simply unnecessary. We know Australians are grappling with a lot of cost of living challenges from rising interest rates, high inflation and climbing bills. These changes add another layer of cost for businesses who ultimately have no choice but to pass this on to consumers.

## When will this happen?

It is expected this legislation will be introduced to Parliament in the second half of this year.



## What can I do to help?

It is time to defend your rights as an independent contractor. Join us in saying no to these damaging reforms. Join the movement today and make your voice heard.

Visit our website [www.defendyourrights.com.au](http://www.defendyourrights.com.au) for ways to get involved.

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Authorised by Denita Wawn, Master Builders Australia, 44 Sydney Avenue, Forrest ACT 2603