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**Reference No:** Omnibus Bill/dh-02-21

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## **Update: Australian Government's IR Omnibus Bill**

Members will recall from a previous [IR Bulletin](#) that on 9 December 2020, the [Fair Work Amendment \(Supporting Australia's Jobs and Economic Recovery\) Bill 2020](#) (IR Omnibus Bill) was introduced to federal parliament following extensive consultation with peak employer groups and unions through five IR Working Groups. Subsequent to its introduction, the IR Omnibus Bill has been referred to Committee Inquiry – with a Report from the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee due on 12 March 2021.

VACC has lodged a formal written submission to the Committee Inquiry, to ensure that the needs of members in the automotive industry are heard and understood. In addition, VACC contributed to relevant sections of the ACCI submission to the Inquiry.

VACC's submission supports key aspects of the IR Omnibus Bill relating to the need to provide certainty in relation casual employment and flexibility in relation to modern Awards. VACC also recommended a number of amendments, focused on ensuring that the changes are practical for small and medium sized businesses and their employees.

Similarly, VACC's submission opposes, and raises a number of serious concerns in relation to, the proposed compliance section of the IR Omnibus Bill which in our view takes an unjustifiably punitive and disproportionate approach against employers, particularly in relation to the proposed higher penalties and introduction of criminal sanctions for underpayment of wages. VACC suggested a number of amendments in the event that the proposed changes are retained – including the need to provide certainty that any criminal sanctions apply to the exclusion of applicable state legislation (e.g. Victorian *Wage Theft Act 2020* is scheduled to commence from 1 July 2021), and that a full exemption should apply for small and medium sized businesses.

**A copy of the VACC submission published by the Committee can be accessed [here](#).**

**A copy of the ACCI submission published by the Committee can be accessed [here](#).**

Members will continue to be kept advised of developments.

In the interim, members seeking further information are encouraged to contact the Workplace Relations team at [ir@vacc.com.au](mailto:ir@vacc.com.au) or 03 9829 1123.

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