



# MEDIA RELEASE

## Australian Mines and Metals Association

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2 July 2007

### Less Industrial Action is no Accident

The Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA), Australia's only national employer association serving the resource sector and allied industries, today released a research paper titled *Constructing Lawful Workplaces*. The paper highlights that Australia's reduced rates of industrial action are due to long term industrial changes which have made parties responsible for their actions.

AMMA Chief Executive Steve Knott noted that *"Australia had come a long way since the 1980's when industrial action was commonplace and Australia had a reputation of not being able to deliver."*

*"Industrial action is now at record low levels in the mining industry which has given investors added confidence. This confidence is evidenced by a recent ABARE report which identifies 275 mining projects in varying stages of planning with a total worth of \$130 Billion. If all of these projects go ahead over 75,000 new jobs would be created."* Mr Knott said

The paper finds that Australia's improved industrial record has not occurred by accident. It is not a product of the resources boom. It is a product of longer term industrial changes which have made parties responsible for their actions.

However, despite an improved industrial relations environment and strong evidence of increased economic prosperity for Australia, there remains an attitude of non-compliance. This has been demonstrated by the behaviour of certain union officials who have engaged in thuggish and unlawful industrial behaviour, threatening a return to past practices in the event of an ALP victory at the upcoming federal election.

What the persistent, inappropriate and unlawful behaviour of some union officials demonstrates is that Australia must maintain a strong and effective compliance regime to protect businesses and Australia's reputation from the economic damage of unlawful industrial action.

Mr Knott said that *"AMMA is most concerned that the ALP policy to abolish the ABCC in 2010 will put uncompleted construction projects into no-mans land and have an adverse impact on future investment. In addition ALP candidate Greg Combet has suggested that the ABCCs powers should be emasculated. This proposal would put all current construction projects at risk of union thuggery."*

"Despite the months of consultation with the ALP a policy vacuum remains in the areas of;

- secondary boycotts
- the Commission's capacity to stop unlawful industrial action
- access to civil Courts to seek remedies for unlawful activity
- Union right of entry into workplaces."



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The paper concludes that the resources sector is making a massive contribution to Australia's standard of living. Having made the hard decisions to reform industrial relations and attitudes to unlawful industrial action, Australia is now reaping the benefits. Now is not the time to return to a previous industrial age. The current compliance system provided by the *Trade Practices Act*, the *Workplace Relations Act*, and the *Building and Construction Industry Improvement Act* is providing demonstrable benefits to the Australian economy. The removal of the current protections would constitute an act of economic vandalism.

Mr Knott warned *"If the ALP continues to allow its policy to be driven by the desires of the union movement, Australia will be in transition to the past – an industrial system dominated by union bosses more concerned with their own power base than Australia's future."*

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