



MEDIA RELEASE

Australian Mines and Metals Association

29 August 2007

ALP wrong on union right of entry

Labor's Industrial relations plans released yesterday will give unions access to all Australian worksites to recruit non-union members.

Australian Mines and Metals Association Chief Executive Steve Knott stated 'If you abolish AWA's the existing union right of entry system that excludes unions from right of entry to AWA sites goes out the window.

Under Section 760 of the Workplace Relations Act 1996 unions are denied access to sites to have '*discussions*' with non union AWA employees. Most resource sector employees are on AWA's and most choose not to belong to a trade union. This often saves them paying union membership fees of up to \$3,000 each year.

By abolishing AWA provisions the ALP proposes that unions can 'visit employees who are eligible to be members of the union'. (Forward with Fairness – Policy Implementation Plan page 23)

'In plain English this means all Australian workers who are currently not trade union members, that is 85% of private sector employees, can be subject to a *visit* by a union seeking to increase union membership revenue for their organization,' Mr Knott said.

'Australians should not be subject to such intrusions into workplaces where employers and employees genuinely agree to have a direct employment relationship without union involvement.'

'For Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard to claim their right of entry laws will be the same as the Coalition's is a nonsense'.

Much rhetoric but no material change

In relation to other aspects of the ALP's "Policy Implementation Plan" the following is still true:

- AWAs will still be abolished
- The ABCC will be abolished
- Unions will have the ability to strike over any matter
- Union collective deals will be forced upon the average Australian – non-union deals are only possible where there are NO union members on a site – one union member will require union involvement
- The outdated and cumbersome award system will still form the safety net for the vast majority of Australians
- There will be massive uncertainty until 2010 in key sectors of the economy such as resources and construction

'The ALP's IR policy remains anti business, is a transition to the past and increases union power. That is why Labor's industrial relations plans continue to be opposed by businesses small, medium and large,' Mr Knott said

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