



MEDIA RELEASE

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“DROP DEAD DATE” = A DIRTY BOMB FOR THE MINING SECTOR

In response to recent media speculation about Labor’s new IR system, Australia’s mining, oil and gas industry has described any move by the Government towards the unilateral termination of existing industrial agreements in workplaces as the equivalent of a ‘dirty bomb’.

“The unilateral termination of all existing agreements would force employers to bargain all over again to retain existing flexibilities, and conversely could result in employees falling back to minimum award wages well below previously agreed rates” said AMMA’s Director of Workplace Policy, Chris Platt.

“Such a move, if it happened would be the equivalent of a dirty bomb for the mining sector,” he said.

According to the Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA), the peak national body representing employers in the resources sector, any proposed move by the Government to introduce a ‘drop – dead’ date for existing industrial agreements would lead to increased disputation and decreased productivity for the resources sector and would be strenuously opposed.

“Australia’s improved industrial relations environment over the past decade is a serious consideration in resources sector investment decisions and it’s imperative the Deputy Prime Minister achieve the right balance through these turbulent economic times”, said Mr Platt.

The resources sector’s contribution to Australian export earnings is forecast to be \$180 billion in 2008-09.

Mr Platt said industry response to significant media speculation about the expansion of right of entry for union officials, along with increased capacity for unions to access the private records of non-members had been overwhelming, with many members suggesting that any rolling back or watering down of existing right of entry laws could result in intimidation of employees who are non-union members as well as significant disruption of mining sites.



Australian Mines and Metals Association

“Such an approach would be at odds with previous commitments made by the government that existing right of entry laws would remain intact.

Mr Platt described the Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard as the grand master of consultation, pointing out that the contrast between the consultation processes undertaken by the previous Government and Labor in relation the two systems as being like chalk and cheese.

“However, the final detail of the new workplace relations system will reveal if the Government is serious about listening to the concerns raised by the sector and insulating Australians from the current economic fall-out, or if it is more interested in giving the ACTU an early Christmas present in an attempt to revive an ailing union movement, whose membership has declined every year since Australia ratified the ILO convention on freedom of association.

A copy of Mr Platt’s speech is attached.

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