



## AUSTRALIAN MINES AND METALS ASSOCIATION

ABN No. 32 004078237

31 May 2005

### MEDIA RELEASE

#### **National Interest Required by Western Australian and Queensland Opposition Leaders on IR**

Imagine the uproar in Western Australia and Queensland if the Eagles, Dockers and Brisbane Lions were relegated to the WAFL and QAFL. They are now part of a national system and there is no turning back. Industrial relations is also going national and for good reasons.

'The lack of uniformity between industrial laws of the various states, as well as between the states and federal jurisdictions, imposes a totally unnecessary level of complexity on business' Mr. Knott, Chief Executive of Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA) said today.

'Claims by the Leader of the Opposition in Western Australia, Matt Birney, and similar claims by the Leader of the Opposition in Queensland, Lawrence Springborg, that retaining a state system of industrial relations will be some form of safe haven for employers from a Beazley-led federal Labor government are plain wrong' Mr. Knott said.

Under the present constitutional arrangements a 'dual system' for the states would provide no protection against a federal Labor rollback of IR reforms proposed by the Howard government. It should also be noted such a rollback would require the Labor party to have control of both Houses of Parliament - a scenario considered unlikely in the next term by most political observers.

'For a nation with a workforce of less than 10 million, it is absurd to retain six separate systems of industrial relations' Mr. Knott said.

The polarisation and division of opinion on industrial relations has been a feature of the Australian political landscape for over 100 years. When analysed over this period there are numerous examples where the positions of both the major parties have changed, sometimes to the extent that they have been on different sides of the same argument.

From a national interest perspective this state and federal IR political product differentiation must stop.

'A new single national system of industrial relations is long overdue and will provide a framework for future productivity growth and enhance the living standards of all Australians' Mr. Knott said.

Future elections will provide an opportunity to review the fairness and effectiveness of such a system.

*For further information contact Steve Knott, Chief Executive, AMMA 0419 918 408.*