



AMMA MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 22 July 2010

EXPANDED UNION RIGHT OF ENTRY RILES RESOURCE INDUSTRY

One year since the Fair Work Act came into operation and some significant shortcomings of the current workplace relations regime are set to be discussed at a forum of resource industry employers in Melbourne this morning.

The Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA) will host a meeting of Victoria's leading resource and construction employers to discuss some of the latest issues confronting the sector under the Fair Work Act.

Steve Knott, Chief Executive of Australia's resource industry employers group, AMMA, said it was now one year since the Fair Work Act had come into full operation - and as such it was timely to discuss some of the issues affecting employers across the sector.

"The interim results of an AMMA/Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) study into the impact of the Fair Work laws on the resource and construction sectors have highlighted there are a number of areas that require urgent review."

"A recent survey of our member companies from across Australia has found 55.8 per cent of respondents have experienced more union visits under the Fair Work Act's expanded Right of Entry laws." Mr Knott said.

"In 2007 the now Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, told the resource sector the new Fair Work laws would not alter existing rules about union access to workplaces, yet the reality is the law changed with more unions more frequently accessing work sites."

"In just one of many examples an AMMA member has been required to process over 450 requests to enter just one of its projects - and this isn't an isolated incident," he said.

"The additional administrative burden as well as the time taken out to interrupt the workforce in order to facilitate all these requests is obvious - and it's not sustainable in the long-term."

"Under the government's IR laws, a union official can also now demand access to a worksite where the union has had no previous involvement in the negotiation of existing workplace agreements and this has changed the rules and significantly increased the number of unions accessing workplaces." Mr Knott said.

Mr Knott said resource industry employers would be meeting in Melbourne today to discuss these as well as a number of other issues surrounding the Fair Work Act.

Mr Knott said the forum would also address a number of other issues of concern to resource industry employers such as: inconsistencies in Fair Work Australia rulings; concerns over the privacy of employee contracts; a massive increase in the number of agreements where union-specific clauses are being demanded; and problems associated with the union monopoly over making enterprise agreements for new projects.

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