

28 February 2007

The Honourable Steven Kons  
Attorney General,  
Minister for Justice and Industrial Relations  
65 Wilson Street  
Burnie TAS 7320

Dear Minister.

*Re: Workplace Services Tasmania - Appointment of Union Officials as Workplace Inspectors*

I refer you to the submission made by AMMA to Mr Roy Ormerod, General Manager Workplace Standards Tasmania (WST) on 12 July 2006 concerning the appointment of current union officials as WST inspectors.

You will recall that AMMA strenuously opposed the proposal by WST conferring inspectorial powers upon AWU in the mining and associated sectors. The trial concept was without precedent in Australia.

Our opposition is primarily based on the existence of a conflict of interest in the simultaneous holding of positions of Union Official and Workplace Services inspector. AMMA's position was supported by the Tasmanian Minerals Council and individual members including Zinifex.

AMMA's Tasmanian representative Mr Bill FitzGerald subsequently met with Mr Ormerod and yourself and we have consistently maintained our opposition to the trial. Our opposition was also reinforced at a meeting between AMMA Chief Executive Steve Knott, Bill FitzGerald and yourself. Mr Ormerod has maintained that the objective of the trial was to provide "another set of eyes and ears" in pursuit of safe workplaces.

We have been advised by our members that the AWU did not access any resource sector premises during the trial period. We submit that the lack of use of the inspectorial powers additionally demonstrates that there is no case to continue the provision of inspectorial powers to Union officials. We urge you not to consider any extension to the trial or reinstatement of the trial in some other format involving non independent parties.

If you have any questions concerning the above please contact either myself or Mr Bill FitzGerald on 62702256.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Platt  
General Manager Workplace Policy