

It's time for true leadership on IR, productivity – AMMA boss

THE chief executive of the national resource industry employer group, AMMA, has today urged Australia's political and academic leaders to show true leadership on workplace relations policy and work collaboratively to address the nation's labour productivity and cost pressure issues.

Speaking at Macquarie University's 'Future of Work' Symposium today, AMMA chief executive Steve Knott says too much focus is wasted debating the 'semantics of workplace productivity', rather than acknowledging and addressing the concerns of Australia's resource industry leaders.

"Clearly, it should be of concern that the leaders of Australian multi-national resources companies are all speaking out at the same time about Australia's falling competitiveness and abysmal global cost position," Mr Knott says.

"This 'resource boom' as media like to coin it, should be Australia's ticket out of the productivity slums, but a growing body of evidence indicates the viability of large-scale mining, oil and gas projects are being undermined by provisions of the Fair Work Act.

"As far as the resource industry is concerned, there is now incontrovertible evidence that the current laws are causing problems for the economy and contributing greatly to Australia's productivity and cost competitiveness issues."

Mr Knott's presentation comes one day after the latest Bureau of Resources and Energy Economics report showed \$383 billion worth of projects are in the uncommitted stage – and warns economic and cost pressures could see many of these projects reconsidered.

"But rather than spruik the commitment of one \$9 billion project that was always anticipated to come online, the government should be addressing industry's concerns about the future sustainability of the 277 major projects that have not yet been committed," Mr Knott says.

"The report also cautioned that in the past six months the investment climate has changed substantially, and not all of those projects will progress to the committed stage depending on market conditions and cost pressures."

In his presentation, Mr Knott highlights resource employers' frustrations with the 'politicking' around workplace relations, arguing there is 'a political paralysis' on both sides of the debate. He says resource employers simply want the policy framework that allows them 'to get on with the job, employ people and create economic wealth'.

"Australia is at a defining point in our economic history and it's time our current leaders stand up to the challenge and get the Fair Work reform process back on track to deliver effective productivity-improving reforms," he says.

"It's time all stakeholders engage in a considered exchange of views about necessary policy reform that would lead to more productive Australian workplaces and promote our national employment and economic interests.

"This is the type of debate that should be central to a modern and mature economy, and it's never too late for Australia's policy makers to show true leadership in this arena."

Following the Senate passing of the Fair Work Amendment Bill 2012 last night, Mr Knott also reiterated industry's concerns for the proposed appointment of two new Vice Presidents to Fair Work Australia. [Click here](#) for Mr Knott's recent comments on the matter.

Steve Knott's full presentation Workplace Productivity in the Resource Industry can be [read here](#).