

MEDIA RELEASE

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Urgent workplace changes cannot wait for Productivity Commission review

The resource industry employer group - AMMA (Australian Mines and Metals Association)

AUSTRALIA cannot afford to let urgent changes to our existing workplace relations system be held up while the Productivity Commission (PC) considers longer term and more fundamental questions for the future regulation of work, says AMMA, the voice of the Australian resource industry.

"The PC review is a historic opportunity for long-term, fundamental reform, but first we must get serious about passing immediate amendments to the current workplace system" says AMMA chief executive Steve Knott.

"Australia cannot afford to live with the increasingly flawed and impractical workplace laws penned by Julia Gillard and the ACTU prior to the GFC and the realities we now face. We cannot wait months or years for critical improvements to the current workplace system."

AMMA calls on Opposition and crossbench Senators to urgently pass workplace amendments currently stalled before the parliament that will:

- Restore balance to union site-entry laws; allow employers and employees to agree on flexible work; and ensure new resource projects can be greenlighted without excessive costs and delays.
- Restore the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) and its full former powers to stamp out criminality and thuggery in the building industry.
- Encourage more employers and employees to pursue greater productivity; encourage unions to pursue realistic rather than inflated claims; and discourage ambit industrial tactics including strikes.

As the ALP and ACTU roll-out their predictable and short-sighted scare campaign, the resource industry faces increasing competitive pressures and waning investor confidence.

Resource exports are expected to retreat to near 2012-13 levels at \$175.9 billion, or a 10% drop. Similarly, the major project investment pipeline has declined by 89 projects, worth more than \$118 billion.

"The changes already before parliament address clearly-identified barriers to productivity and competitiveness. Surely we are capable as a nation of delivering improvements to our existing workplace system at the same time as considering more fundamental questions," Mr Knott says.

"The call from the ACTU to halt the progress of these existing amendments is nothing but a stalling tactic part of a deliberately orchestrated campaign to misrepresent what the PC review is all about.

"We call on Senators to see through the spin, engage with the proposals on their merits and pass the Bills currently before them."

This week, AMMA lodged a [submission](#) to the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee on the *Fair Work Amendment (Bargaining Processes) Bill 2014*, arguing that the amendments represent an important step towards addressing Australia's productivity and competitive challenges.

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