

MEDIA RELEASE

20 May, 2015

Don't waste opportunity for workplace reform, says AMMA chief

AMMA - Australian Mines and Metals Association

THE head of national resource industry employer group AMMA today used a major oil and gas conference to urge business, unions and parliamentarians to not waste the opportunity for 'sensible, productive and competitive reforms' to Australia's workplace relations system.

Addressing the APPEA Conference in Melbourne, AMMA chief executive Steve Knott called on the broader business community to 'grasp the opportunity and build the case for change' as the Productivity Commission continues its current review of Australia's workplace laws.

"It's been very clear for a long time that fundamental problems with our workplace relations system are detracting from Australia as a competitive place to invest and do business," Mr Knott said.

"AMMA's submission to the Productivity Commission in March was based on 12 months of extensive research including member surveys, KPMG and other independent analysis, case study reviews, international comparative data and more.

"This was all designed to provide serious input to the review of Australia's workplace relations system. Many of the other submissions from unions, academics and employers could be best described as shallow and superficial.

"As the Productivity Commission continues its work during the remainder of 2015, our nation must not waste the opportunity to secure more balanced and practical workplace laws that benefit all Australians, including employers and employees."

Mr Knott challenged Australia's business leaders to consider if the current workplace system was 'fit or purpose' in meeting the competitive and operational challenges of their businesses.

"This is an opportunity to engage in genuine discussions on workplace regulation that could build a stronger resource industry and a stronger Australia," he said.

"We must ask the difficult questions. Does the current workplace system foster competitive enterprises from which innovation and employment opportunities flow?"

"Does it provide investors with confidence that new projects will be delivered on time and on budget, and is it adaptable to the changes in our economy and international markets that we must be able to account for?"

The Productivity Commission is due to hand down its interim report in July 2015, allowing for further consultation with industry. Mr Knott's presentation detailed AMMA's 'roadmap to reform' which includes the resource industry's top recommendations for change:

- Agreement making that restricts unproductive content and secures new projects in a timely and competitive process.
- A system that ensures strikes are the last resort only, and are not against the public interest.
- Sensible and balanced rules for unions to access workplaces without disruptions and costs.
- More practical and balanced protections for employees that are also fair to businesses.
- Remodelling our employment institutions to better support productivity and jobs growth.

Recent [KPMG analysis](#) revealed AMMA's recommended reforms could potentially support resource industry productivity growth of up to 5%, and increase investment by up to 8%. This could deliver up to \$30bn in additional GDP and 36,000 additional jobs.

MEDIA: For a copy of Steve Knott's speech, contact Kylie.Sully@amma.org.au or 0409 781 580