



AMMA MEDIA RELEASE

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MUA AGREEMENT: COMPLY OR DIE

The so called 'agreement' in settlement of a three month dispute between the MUA and vessel operators in Australia's offshore oil and gas sector has created a worrying precedent according to AMMA, the national employers' organisation for the resources and energy sector.

AMMA Chief Executive, Steve Knott, said the dispute highlighted that acts of virtual piracy were allowed to occur under the Fair Work regime, with 'agreement' coming down to employers being forced to either 'comply or die'.

"The nature of the dispute clearly demonstrates the ease unions can use the new Fair Work Act laws to initiate damaging strike activity in pursuit of outrageous claims, all while the Government sits idly by and watches such reckless action unfold from the sidelines."

The spin doctors are referring to these negotiations as 'tough bargaining' and 'welcoming news of agreement' to soften the impact of an IR strike gun being held to the head of employers in this critically important sector.

"When people hear members of the Government cheering on an agreement which in effect results in a \$50,000 pay rise to already world's best paid seafarers earning \$ 130,000, they would rightly be asking themselves how such increases could be economically justified."

Mr Knott said the nature of the dispute had rightly drawn many elements of the Fair Work Act into question.

"Given Australian employers face a brand new industrial relations framework - elements of which are just four weeks old - it is vitally important for organisations such as AMMA highlight IR legislative deficiencies on behalf of its members," Mr Knott said.

"That is what our members expect of us, and as an organisation dedicated to representing their members that is what we shall always deliver."

"In working to see a speedy resolution of this dispute those actively involved in the negotiation process - such as AMMA - have consistently called for guidance and assistance from those in Government responsible for framing and implementing the Fair Work Act, so as to ensure it conformed to the Federal Government's overall legislative goals and objectives."

Increased strike action, \$50,000 per annum increases, no productivity and efficiency offsets, and untold international damage to Australia's investment reputation should be at odds the new 'Fair Work' system.

"Regrettably, as former IR President Justice Higgins stated in 1915, it appears that the 'barbaric weapon of strike action', will continue to be used by militant unions with no moderating effects from government." Mr Knott said.

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