



AMMA MEDIA RELEASE

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DPM's 'No-Nonsense' Approach to Illegal Strikes Welcomed

Employers from across the nation's resource and energy sectors say they are encouraged by the no-nonsense approach to illegal strike activity currently being promoted by the Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard.

Steve Knott, Chief Executive of the country's peak employer group for the resource and energy sector, the Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA) said it was encouraging to see the Deputy Prime Minister respond to growing industry concerns about the escalation in disruptive strike activity being experienced in recent months.

"The resource and energy sector is driving the Australian economy forward, and we were pleased to hear the Deputy Prime state unequivocally that illegal industrial activity will not be tolerated by the Government." Mr Knott said.

Speaking at an industry breakfast in Western Australia today Mr Knott said it was no secret there were certain unions in the West and elsewhere who have ignored Australia's industrial relations laws.

"Given the Deputy Prime Minister's comments earlier this week, we're hopeful government bodies will be provided with adequate resources and powers to take targeted action and protect Australia's international reputation as a reliable resources and energy supplier." he said.

At the breakfast, Mr Knott released an industry Discussion Paper proposing a range of strategies for consideration to reduce unlawful industrial action and making protected strike action an action of last resort.

"The AMMA Discussion Paper highlights examples for consideration of how this may be achieved." Mr Knott said.

"The majority of AMMA Members have been operating in modern, productive and dispute-free workplaces. This has been vital in ensuring that not only employers can get on with the job, but so can their highly valued employees"

The proposals advanced in the discussion paper include:

1. Before a protected action ballot can be conducted, Fair Work Australia should be satisfied claims being made would not adversely impact on the employer or industry concerned, and also ensure industrial action is a matter of last resort in the negotiation process;
2. Unions should be subject to immediate sanction for unlawful industrial action or failure to comply with orders of the FWA or a Court;

3. Unlawful strike action by a member of a union constitutes a breach by the union unless the union can show it has taken all reasonable steps to prevent the unlawful action;
4. Office holders of unions that have been found to have committed serious or repeated breaches the Act should be disqualified from holding office;
5. Unions being required to report annually on both legal and illegal industrial action taken by their members;
6. The Fair Work Information Statement required to be provided to employees should include greater details of circumstances in which industrial action can and cannot be taken.

ENDS