



AMMA MEDIA RELEASE

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WEST AUSTRALIAN RESOURCE INDUSTRY EMPLOYERS CALL FOR CHANGES TO GREENFIELD AGREEMENTS UNDER FAIR WORK LAWS

One year since the Fair Work Act came into operation and some significant shortcomings of Labor's new workplace relations regime are set to be discussed at a forum of resource industry employers in Perth this morning.

Chief Executive of the nation's largest resource industry employers group, AMMA, Mr Steve Knott, said a recent survey of employers in the sector had raised significant concerns over the ability of employers to get Greenfield agreements off the ground for major projects under the new Fair Work regime.

"At present the Fair Work Act does not provide any alternative for an employer to create a Greenfield Agreements where unions are holding up new projects.

"Disturbingly employers are reporting an increase in the number of instances where unions are vetoing agreements until they can extract significant concessions from employers, with little or no commitment towards improving productivity or workplace practices." Mr Knott said.

"With up to two thirds of the sector moving into bargaining rounds over the coming months - the last thing the sector can afford at the moment is for agreement making processes to get bogged down."

Mr Knott said he will be raising his concerns with both Ms Gillard and Mr Abbott over the coming weeks.

"It is clearly in the national interest to have an IR system that does not allow economically significant projects to be held to ransom by rouge unions pursuing exorbitant claims - - if an agreement with the union cannot be reached, then Fair Work Australia should have the ability to register the agreement if it is satisfied the agreement meets the conditions of the better off overall test."

"Such a solution would clearly provide greater investor certainty at the crucial project planning and commencement stages, and ensures the interests of both employers and employees alike are addressed." Mr Knott said.

Mr Knott said this morning's forum in Perth would also address a number of other issues that had been identified of concern to resource industry employers such as: inconsistencies in Fair Work Australia rulings; a significant increase in union right of entry demands; concerns over the privacy of employee contracts; and, a major increase in the number of agreements where union-specific clauses are being demanded.

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