

AMMA MEDIA RELEASE

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Confidence in Fair Work Act falls for resource employers

The workplace relations environment facing Australia's resource industry has become substantially more difficult according to a recent survey of employers.

A survey of resource industry employers, undertaken by the resource industry employer group Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA), in conjunction with RMIT University School of Economics, Finance and Marketing, found a significant decrease in employer confidence with the Fair Work Act over the six months to October 2010.

AMMA Chief Executive Steve Knott said the survey analysis found over the latest survey period levels of employer concern had risen significantly, with confidence in the new workplace relations system continuing to fall.

"Previously issues associated with bargaining for new enterprise agreements including the new union monopoly on agreement making for major projects were of major concern to employers.

"In addition to these concerns, over the six months to October 2010 we saw the increased presence of union representatives on worksites and rising union right of entry demands adding to employer concerns within the sector.

"It is clear from our latest survey findings increased union activity both in negotiations, as well as in the workplace itself, are having a major impact on levels of confidence in workplace relations arrangements under the Fair Work Act," Mr Knott said.

Mr Knott said the number of resource industry employers describing their workplace relations environment as either "good" or "excellent" has dropped dramatically from 54.4% to just 32.0%.

"This has been highlighted by a large jump in the number of employers who have described their workplace relations environment as "barely acceptable" - increasing from just 4.4% to 29.2% over the corresponding period." he said.

Mr Knott said other major issues raised by respondents to the latest survey when asked about their major IR concerns were:

- inflated wage and condition claims and outcomes;
- the prospect of protected or unprotected strike action;
- termination of employment/redundancy concerns including the prospect of unfair dismissal claims; and,
- the transition to modern awards.

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