

MEDIA RELEASE

March 29, 2011

West Australian resource employers target migration laws

Resource industry employers are meeting in Perth today to discuss workplace policy and skills issues affecting the industry.

AMMA Workplace Policy Director, Geoff Bull, said discussions would focus on employers' concerns with their ability to meet demands for a skilled workforce, and difficulties accessing foreign workers through the skilled migration system.

"Resource industry employers are currently advising of circumstances where overseas employees who are perfectly capable of performing a role are being knocked back, despite being more than able to converse in English," Mr Bull said.

"While employers welcome some of the recent amendments to the skilled migration system by the Federal Government, more could be done to both streamline the system and ensure its ongoing viability into the future."

Mr Bull also said, with the resource industry facing a significant skills shortage between now and 2015 - the projected short-fall numbering 36,000 employees - it would greatly impact on West Australian operations.

"With the resource industry expected to be employing over 550,000 people by 2012, it is vitally important for West Australian resource industry employers to be heard on current and emerging workforce issues," Mr Bull said.

Mr Bull said employers would also be discussing a number of other issues which have emerged in the first part of 2011, including:

- a number of significant legal cases, including a recent decision to allow a minority of employees to call a strike at a business where the majority of employees were opposed to taking industrial action;
- the growing levels of concern about union right of entry experienced across the industry over the past six months;
- concerns with unions engaging in membership turf wars on the West Coast; and
- compliance issues emerging from the move to a national OHS system.

"AMMA believes industry meetings such as these are vital in ensuring resource industry employers are best placed to meet the challenges emerging both within the industry as well as across the broader workplace relations environment," Mr Bull said.

ENDS

Media Contacts

Minna Knight, Director of Media & Public Affairs
M: 0429 143 449 or E: minna.knight@amma.org.au

Andrew Bibb, Campaign & Media Adviser
M: 0408 734 811 or E: andrew.bibb@amma.org.au