

## Migration myths to be addressed at Fair Work Summit

Misconceptions surrounding migration and overseas workers will be addressed by resource industry employer group AMMA at a Fair Work Summit in Sydney today.

Following the first Enterprise Migration Agreement (EMA) granted by the government for the Roy Hill project last week, AMMA chief executive Steve Knott says it is time to put an end to the many misleading and inaccurate arguments about the use of skilled migrants.

"We are concerned that at the first mention of EMAs or similar skilled migration programs, it has become commonplace for unions to roll out the same old campaigns of negativity and self-interested public fear mongering, complete with recurring misinformation," Mr Knott says.

"The EMA concept was never about replacing Australian jobs with migrants. EMA's are only available to mega resource projects with a capital expenditure of \$2 billion or more and with a peak workforce of more than 1500 workers.

"These high thresholds of capital value and employee numbers demonstrate that the very nature of EMAs is to be a last resort for a handful of our biggest projects only."

Mr Knott says any employer who applies for sponsored visas to bring in overseas workers must have a specific program in place for the up-skilling of Australian workers through apprenticeships, traineeships, graduate programs and other avenues.

"In the case of Roy Hill, over \$20 million dollars and 2000 training places have been committed," he says.

Delivering the presentation at the *5<sup>th</sup> Annual Fair Work Summit 2012*, AMMA workplace policy officer Alyce Bowe will also address the common misconception that the resource industry is a significant user of temporary 457 visas.

"Quite the reverse is true," Ms Bowe says.

"According to the Department of Immigration and Citizenship data, the mining industry is only the fifth largest user of temporary 457 visas with 7,290 457-visa holders working in the industry.

"The use of skilled labour from overseas is not seen by the industry as a way of sourcing inexpensive labour or providing an alternative to existing skilled Australian labour.

"In fact, salary rates for overseas workers are required to be set at the same rate an Australian worker receives.

"The resource industry only relies on the use of skilled migration to fill the critical temporary skills gaps that at this stage are unable to be solved by local supply.

"Employers in the industry are focused on up-skilling and supplementing their Australian workforce, rather than replacing it."

### **MEDIA:**

The full presentation given by AMMA Workplace Policy Officer Alyce Bowe is available [here](#):

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