

Carbon Tax, Mining Tax and now anti-migrant union protests – the damage continues

IN a week where resource employers were slapped with the federal government's Mining Tax and Carbon Tax, misleading union protests against temporary migrant workers at midday today only further undermine future investment in Australian projects, jobs and the economy.

Respected industry leader Peter Johnston, who is AMMA Vice President and CEO of Minara Resources, says Australia's reputation and competitiveness is being severely damaged by the 'shallow and unnecessary demonisation' of the resource industry.

His comments come as the CFMEU and other trade unions prepare to publicly protest in Perth and other cities against the use of temporary foreign workers to help build Australian resource projects that will deliver employment and economic benefits for decades to come.

"The resource sector's number one challenge is that through policies such as the Carbon Tax, the Mining Tax and an industrial framework that has encouraged a return to 1970s style unionism, Australia is being priced out of the market for future investment opportunities," says Johnston, who is also chairman of the Minerals Council of Australia (MCA).

"There is no doubt that international competitors are using this period of political and investor uncertainty to grow their businesses substantially. Australia has historically relied on the use of skilled migrants on nation-defining infrastructure projects. We need to recognise the small but important role these temporary workers play in helping us secure this great investment opportunity and long-term permanent positions for Australian people.

"The government and the trade union movement need to stop the demonisation of Australia's resource industry as without a sensible approach on these matters, they risk damaging the industry's long-term viability."

Earlier this week, AMMA released the results of the latest *Workplace Relations Research Project* report, which showed unions are stalling one in five new resources projects by refusing to negotiate with the employer in an attempt to extort higher wages and conditions.

In response to today's union rally, AMMA acting chief executive Minna Knight says the presumption that mining employers are not providing training and employment opportunities for Australians is 'completely wrong and misleading to the public'.

"It's a major concern for the industry that the CFMEU has only this week been granted a place on the federal government's advisory council for skilled migration, despite actively promoting this damaging and misleading rally," she says.

"This union campaign of misinformation and fear mongering doesn't change the fact that EMA's and other skilled migration programs are creating Australian jobs, not replacing them.

"There are more than \$500 billion worth of projects in Australia's pipeline and we all have two options here. We can implement constructive workforce strategies that ensure we have the arms and legs to build these future projects and retain the long-term employment that come with them.

"Or, we can continue to allow trade unions to indulge in divisive and misleading campaigns, designed to alienate the very people that can assist us to get our projects built on time and on budget."

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