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Silly Sunday – Union Pilbara rallies again miss the point

A union campaign set to bring protests to the Pilbara on Sunday is misleading the public about temporary skilled migration and putting future investment in the region's projects, jobs and economy at risk, according to resource industry employer group AMMA.

AMMA acting chief executive Minna Knight said the union's actions were distorting the truth about the resource industry's workforce practices.

"The union rally we saw in Perth last week and now planned for Port Hedland and Karratha will only damage the Pilbara's attractiveness for resource investors and is overshadowing the opportunities that are being delivered to locals in the region," Ms Knight said.

"Resource employers support jobs for local workers and only rely on migrants to meet the immediate skills shortages that cannot be met by local supply. The latest ABS Labour Force stats show 10,000 new Australian jobs were created in WA's mining sector from February to May alone.

"With the help of temporary skilled migrants, the large projects that the Pilbara has become famous for are able to get off the ground and into the construction phases. This, in turn, creates even more Australian jobs and training opportunities for locals.

"The furore about Hancock's Enterprise Migration Agreement (EMA) for the Roy Hill project conveniently leaves out the facts.

"Roy Hill has guaranteed 2000 training places and an additional 6300 jobs for Australians. Furthermore 83 per cent of the \$10 billion capital expenditure for the construction of this project will be spent in Australia to support long-term local jobs and industry."

Ms Knight's comments come shortly after AMMA released the results of the latest *Workplace Relations Research Project* report, which showed unions are stalling one in five new resources projects by frustrating the Greenfield agreement process. This militant activity is aimed at extracting unsustainable higher wages and conditions from employers and only damages investment confidence in the region.

As the industry awaits the Federal Government's final recommendations from its review of the *Fair Work Act 2009*, AMMA has urged the government to consider the adverse effects of the current legislation on West Australian workplaces before further investment in the region is impacted.

"There is no doubt the Pilbara region remains Australia's epicentre of prosperous new resources projects, including the Roy Hill and Solomon Hub projects onshore and offshore, LNG projects like Gorgon, Wheatstone and Pluto," Ms Knight said.

"The Pilbara is generating north of \$100 billion for the West Australian economy. With a further \$98 billion worth of projects in various pre-approval stages across Western Australia, the Pilbara has the potential to create tens of thousands of jobs for local workers.

"But this can only continue if employers can utilise constructive workforce strategies to deliver these projects on time and on budget."

Media:

The AMMA *Workplace Relations Research Project – Fifth Report* can be [read here](#).

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