

## Government and Opposition address skilled migration at Perth mining conference

BOTH sides of government will address a room full of resource industry employers this morning, as critical skills shortages and misleading union campaigns continue to put future projects at risk.

Labor Senator for Western Australia Louise Pratt and Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Immigration Senator Michaelia Cash will outline their respective parties' positions on skilled migration at the AMMA Migration and Labour Sourcing Conference in Perth.

AMMA executive director, industry Minna Knight said the state's resources activity had the potential to create thousands of future employment and training opportunities for Australians but this will only be realised if employers could fill immediate vacancies for highly skilled workers.

"There are more than \$135 billion worth of projects either committed or under construction in Western Australia and a further \$98 billion in the pipeline. Forecasts from both the state government and industry are that at least 60,000 new jobs will be created in our state's resource industry by 2016," Ms Knight said.

"For Australia to secure the long-term employment and economic benefits from our resources projects, we must have the right policy settings in place to ensure the industry's productivity isn't further undermined by restricted access to skilled and capable workers."

Ms Knight said the resource industry is concerned about the potential influence of 'misleading and divisive' union campaigns on the federal government's skilled migration programs.

"Misinformation from some in the union movement unfortunately overshadows the opportunities that Western Australia's pipeline of projects offers," she said.

"The introduction of the Enterprise Migration Agreement (EMA) program was a welcome step in response to the small but important strategy to use skilled migration to help overcome our industry's skills shortages in the short term and create more long-term jobs for Australians.

"The EMA for the Roy Hill project 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.

"Economic and employment opportunities like this depend on the ability of resource employers to access effective skilled migration programs without fear of being targeted by damaging and self-serving union campaigns."

Throughout the conference program, delegates will hear a range of presentations and panel debates on labour sourcing and recruitment solutions specific to the resource industry.

Edith Cowan University researcher Dr Susanne Bahn will also [present findings](#) from an industry-first study into the use of temporary migrant workers in the Western Australian resource industry.

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