

Senate must end the political circus and reject Shorten's workplace changes

THE extreme lengths the Gillard Government has gone to pander to its union backers reached beyond absurd levels yesterday as it came closer to legislating unjustified new union site entry laws, breaking more IR promises to the wider community and creating more productivity and cost impacts for Australian employers.

National resource industry employer group AMMA is calling for the *Fair Work Amendment Bill 2013* to be rejected by the Senate when it resumes later this month, following yesterday's political circus which saw the outrageously union-friendly laws passed by the lower house.

"This amendment bill extends a legislative right for unions to impose themselves into employee lunchrooms, despite 87% of private sector workers saying 'thanks but no thanks' to union membership," says AMMA chief executive Steve Knott.

"These site entry provisions will inflict further unnecessary costs and productivity impacts on Australian resource employers as they are forced to play the role of tour guide to union officials on remote specialist mining, oil and gas operations.

"It is beyond comprehension how these laws are justified; they seek to fix a problem that does not exist. The existing system allows for the Fair Work Commission to involve itself and make rulings in the small number of disputes that arise over union site access or where they conduct their meetings.

"Every LNG platform in the country, every offshore construction vessel and site, and every remote mining operation in Australia will be left defenceless to militant union officials if the Senate passes these amendments."

Julia Gillard pledged in 2007 not to change right of entry laws. This latest artificial leg-up for the union movement comes in addition to the Gillard Government:

- Recently demoting two Howard-era appointed Fair Work Commission Vice Presidents;
- Further stacking of the Fair Work Commission with ALP union mates;
- Demonising the small number of highly valued 457 skilled foreign workers in Australia; and
- Moving to change Australia's migration laws to give their MUA union masters reach beyond what the Federal Court deemed was in accord with Australia's international obligations.

"The events of the past few days show just how rushed and ill-considered the government's approach has been, with backroom deals being done and then reneged upon at the eleventh hour," Mr Knott says.

"These amendments represent another industrial favour to the government's union backers in an expensive election year. The ALP has demonstrated a constant political desire to put unions between an employer and its employees in any way possible, regardless of the views of workers and the community.

"Public record shows the Coalition overstepped the mark on IR in 2005, but the Gillard Government's recent actions are identical. They are making changes they said they wouldn't; that they have no mandate from the electorate for; and they are thumbing their noses at due process.

"We urge the Senate to vote against the *Fair Work Amendment Bill 2013* in its entirety when the proposed legislation comes before it."

MEDIA ENQUIRIES: Contact AMMA media adviser Tom Reid on 0419 153 407