

## Changes to migration zone – does the government really know what it's proposing?

ALLOCATING just 15 minutes of parliamentary debate for changes that would breach Australia's international obligations, damage the oil and gas industry and double the coverage of our federal laws, shows the government hasn't properly considered the ramifications of its *Migration Act (Offshore Resources) Amendment Bill 2013*.

Speaking at today's Senate Committee hearing into the bill, Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA) executive director Scott Barklamb said the changes would be 'bad law'.

"No evidence has been put forth supporting any need for change," Mr Barklamb said.

"This legislation appears to be inconsistent with Australia's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which our nation signed in 1982.

"This was described as possibly the most significant legal instrument of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and if the current government believes breaking this international convention requires just 15 minutes of the Senate's time, it's not in the business of responsible legislation.

"Clearly the government does not fully understand the significance of what it is actually proposing.

"Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone and Extended Continental Shelf comprise a marine area of some 10 million sq km, or 1.3 times larger than Australia's land mass.

"This bill seeks to double the reach and jurisdiction of the Australian government.

"The proposals in this bill are not 'tweaking' or 'closing a loophole', as the government and the MUA assert. They are radical changes that would more than double the reach of Australia's laws."

AMMA urged the Senate to consider the wider impacts on the resource industry, which needs our national maritime laws to operate in-line with everywhere else in the world and not be tied up in more red tape and costs at the behest of the MUA.

"We cannot afford to be the only country in the world that makes it so difficult and expensive for a small number of foreign vessels to drop off supplies or complete vital short-term contracts in international waters," Mr Barklamb said.

"We need Australia's laws to reflect the global nature of resource industry operations. Securing international investment, local jobs and ultimately our energy security, depends on it."

Read AMMA's Submission on the *Migration Act (Offshore Resources) Amendment Bill 2013* [here](#).

Read an AMMA opinion piece published in *The Australian* on this matter, [here](#).

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