

Day 1: Rudd sells business out to unions

PRIME Minister Kevin Rudd has already broken last night's pledge to 'work closely with Australia's business community' by today ignoring employers and proceeding with three government anti-business, pro-union legislative changes, says resource industry employer group AMMA.

AMMA chief executive Steve Knott says the returned ALP leader has clearly ignored consistent business concerns about the following pieces of legislation:

- Migration Amendment (Temporary Sponsored Visas) Bill 2013 **Passed House of Reps today**
- Migration Amendment (Offshore Resources Activity) Bill 2013 **Passed the Senate today**
- Fair Work Amendment Bill 2013 **Expected to pass through the Senate tonight**

"Most in the business community had a forlorn hope that Kevin Rudd would govern for all Australians. In his first day back on the job, it is clear he is not acting in the national interest but in the sectional interests of the union bosses which have installed him in the role," Mr Knott says.

"The sole purpose of all these legislative changes is to make it tougher for business and to place unions between employers and their employees.

"These legislative proposals are all bad for business, are sponsored by union bosses and reflect political payment of Kevin Rudd's 'I owe you' cheques to the union movement.

"If Prime Minister Rudd was serious about forging stronger ties with Australian employers, he would have seen that these three bills have the following common themes:

- They are all vehemently opposed by Australia's business community and lack any wider public support;
- They have not been subject to appropriate business consultation or regulatory impact statements;
- They are all rushed and have not been subject to due parliamentary process, with debate guillotined to as little as 15 minutes; and
- They are all contrary to the national interest and appear to be driven solely by misleading political agendas and trade union demands."

"Rather than facilitate some proper consideration of these significant business-inhibiting legislative reforms, it appears the ALP's change of leadership has come with unfortunate trade union caveats and political payback."

On the 457 Visa Bill (Migration Amendment (Temporary Sponsored Visas) Bill 2013)

"The divisive and borderline-xenophobic debate currently around temporary skilled migration is both embarrassing to our nation's international reputation and is playing out very negatively in the global investment marketplace," Mr Knott said.

"These amendments are clearly contradictory to the position of former Immigration Minister and the new Treasurer of Australia Chris Bowen, who in late 2012 repeated his effusive support for the 457 Visa scheme that was uncontroversial and had bipartisan political and broader business support."

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