

MEDIA RELEASE

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Maritime Union's intention to strike 'premature, irresponsible', says resource industry

AMMA (Australian Mines and Metals Association)

THE Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) has prematurely and irresponsibly flagged its intention to strike against an employer undertaking critical vessel operations within Australia's offshore oil and gas sector.

Resource industry employer group AMMA is representing 19 vessel companies in Enterprise Agreement (EA) negotiations with the MUA that will set wages and conditions for Australia's oil and gas maritime support sector over the next four years.

Yesterday, the MUA lodged an application for a Protected Action Ballot Order with the Fair Work Commission, meaning within one month the union could begin disrupting the supply chain for Australia's offshore oil and gas projects in pursuit of their industrial interests.

"We are surprised and disappointed the MUA has prematurely lodged an application to strike, given four meetings are scheduled during the next week to progress these matters with the assistance of the Fair Work Commission," says AMMA executive director Scott Barklamb.

"A wide range of matters are still being negotiated and the employers remain committed to working towards a deal that is fair for everyone.

"Industrial action at this time would be very premature given the parties are still before the Commission trying to clarify and resolve their positions.

"It is very concerning that the union is preparing to strike against Australia's vessel operators, which are small-to-medium sized Australian businesses, before allowing for negotiations to move positively towards a resolution."

A [Deloitte Access Economics](#) report published in August found wages growth in the offshore maritime support sector have doubled over the past decade, with annual salaries for general seafarer duties starting from \$170k per year; and from \$240k per year on specialist vessels.

Mr Barklamb says the MUA's claim that potentially striking will support local workers is 'misleading' and that the vessel operators are concerned that a 24% pay rise over four years and a range of other union demands will have major financial and productivity impacts on the industry.

"The vessel companies are absolutely committed to hiring Australian seafarers and they are absolutely committed to working with the MUA towards an agreement that would see Australian seafarers remain the best paid and most highly valued in the world," he says.

"Between now and 2018, \$280 billion worth of new oil and gas projects in Australia will create around 50,000 jobs for Australian people. To secure these projects, Australia needs the MUA to work with employers and keep people, goods and services flowing to offshore facilities.

"If we don't all approach these negotiations in a spirit of shared interests for the future of our industry, we will certainly all share the consequences if the employment and economic benefits of new resource projects are lost to overseas competitors."

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