

# CONFIDENCE, PRODUCTIVITY KEY TO PROLONGING RESOURCE INDUSTRY STRENGTH

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THROUGHOUT 2013, RESOURCE EMPLOYERS HAVE NAVIGATED AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX AND CHALLENGING OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT OUR SECTOR CONTINUES TO BE A KEY DRIVER OF IMPROVED WELLBEING AND LIVING STANDARDS ACROSS AUSTRALIA'S WIDER COMMUNITY.

Data from the Reserve Bank of Australia shows that our industry generates 1.1 million Australian jobs and \$250 billion, or 18 per cent, of the nation's annual output. This is on top of the \$20 billion in taxes and royalties generated by resources activities each year.

While there is no escaping the fact that 2013 has seen great challenges and a denting of investor confidence globally, the strength of Australia's heightened mining and resources activity can continue for decades with the right level of regulatory and policy support to restore Australia's international competitiveness.

AMMA has long advocated for appropriate workplace relations settings that provide adequate employee protections, but also allow employers to be flexible, to innovate, and ultimately to drive a highly productive and engaged workforce.

Our ongoing priorities aim to ensure new resource projects can viably come to market in Australia through a responsible process; not be held to ransom by exorbitant wage claims, industrial unrest or unnecessary delays.

From our perspective, the Coalition's Policy to Improve the Fair Work laws doesn't tick all the boxes, but it makes a good start in restoring genuine balance to our workplaces, and addressing the plethora of recent anti-business, pro-union IR re-regulation that has been so damaging to Australian businesses.

Welcome first moves include restoring the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) as an effective

industry regulator, breaking the union monopoly on new project agreements, and restoring some balance to what have proven to be excessive and often disruptive union site entry powers.

Another priority area for our sector will be continued access to responsible skilled migration programs, including the 457 visa scheme and Enterprise Migration Agreements (EMA) – both of which were unfairly targeted by widespread and vitriolic trade union campaigns throughout 2013.

The resource industry is also facing a crossroads at which competition for global capital is becoming even more fierce, and our national productivity is at its lowest level in a generation.

While an overhaul of Australia's workplace relations laws is required, just as important to turning around Australia's productivity woes is a range of non-legislative initiatives in the areas of investment, work practices, leadership, technology, productive bargaining and skills development.

Innovative solutions to overcome challenges and stimulate investment in these areas would complement the government's regulatory reform agenda.

As AMMA moves into its 96th year of representing Australia's national resource industry, a continuing theme across all of our activities is to help mould an operating environment that enables our members to continually innovate, boost productivity and viably compete in the global marketplace.

We look forward to a successful and exciting 2014 as Australia's resource industry continues to deliver on the opportunities it has worked so hard to create in recent times.

**About AMMA:** The Australian Mines and Metals Association (AMMA) was founded in 1918, and is the national resource industry employer group. For further information visit [www.amma.org.au](http://www.amma.org.au).

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