

# MEDIA RELEASE

April 9, 2014

## **Domestic reform essential to deliver on benefits of free trade**

*Statement from Steve Knott, Chief Executive*

*National resource industry employer group AMMA (Australian Mines and Metals Association)*

AUSTRALIA'S resource industry congratulates Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Trade and Investment Minister Andrew Robb on securing historic free trade agreements with Japan and South Korea.

Japan and South Korea are top consumers of our country's resource exports including coal, copper, iron ore and crude petroleum. Multi-billion dollar investments from the two nations have been critical to Australia's emergence as one of the world's LNG powerhouses.

However, for Australia to take full advantage of new opportunities created by these free trade agreements, our nation must reform key areas of domestic policy central to our competitiveness and productivity.

Free trade gets Australia into the game, but success will depend on reforming our economy and labour markets to make it easier to do business in and from this country.

The first step should be supporting the abolition of the carbon and mining taxes – taxes shown to produce negligible outcomes for our economy and our community, but which damage our global competitiveness and investment prospects.

We must also get back into the business of labour market reform, firstly by the Senate passing the government's initial round of improvements to the Fair Work Act that will start to make it easier to attract new major resource industry developments to Australia.

The planned restoration of the Australian Building and Construction Commission (ABCC) must be supported to again effectively police the rule of law in an industry that delivers critical infrastructure for our export sectors.

The structure of our national workplace tribunal, the Fair Work Commission, should be reviewed to align with the world's best employment tribunals, which would include creating a dedicated appeals bench to ensure more consistent decision making and greater confidence from all users.

The pending Productivity Commission-led review of our workplace system should be embraced by all as an opportunity for an open and thorough consideration of how we regulate work to properly support the economic and social aspirations of our nation.

New free trade agreements with Japan and South Korea open doors for Australia to become one of the most diversified and globally engaged trading nations.

Long overdue domestic reform will allow us to seize the opportunities increased trade creates to improve the living standards and employment prospects of all Australians.

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