

MEDIA RELEASE

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New offshore resource visa to alleviate Labor's punitive regulation

AMMA – Australia's resource industry employer group

THE Australian Government has today used AMMA's national resource industry summit to affirm its commitment to sensible visa arrangements that minimise red tape and unnecessary costs for important, job-creating offshore oil and gas projects.

Speaking at AMMA's 2014 Australian Resource People Summit in Perth, Assistant Minister for Immigration and Border Protection, Senator Michaelia Cash, said the government continued to pursue the repeal of the *Migration Amendment (Offshore Resources Activity) Act 2013*.

"(The Government is) concerned that the ORA Act will impose an additional regulatory burden, and additional costs, on this critical sector and have done our very best to ensure that this does not occur," Minister Cash said at today's AMMA Summit.

"The new visas use existing visas that the industry is already familiar with. This will make it easier to manage the transition, and avoid the costs of developing and implementing a new visa."

AMMA executive director Scott Barklamb welcomed the Minister's commitment to repealing the ORA legislation.

"This legislation should never have been imposed," Mr Barklamb said.

"Despite the serious concerns of the resource industry, the Gillard/Rudd government rushed this legislation through the former parliament without any justification. This was punitive regulation for regulation's sake, imposed at the behest of unions.

"There was never any loophole to be closed. Everything other country in the world regulates employment on offshore projects only within their proper territorial jurisdiction.

"The Labor legislation would do nothing to protect the jobs of Australian employees and served only to deliberately complicate doing business in Australia's resource industry."

The ORA Act passed parliament in 2013 but will not come into effect until June 30, 2014. AMMA submitted to the Senate Committee investigating its repeal, that Labor's legislation:

- Is inconsistent with international practice and how resource-related vessels operate in international waters subject to management by other countries.
- Is inconsistent with industry practice and particularly impractical in an economic environment in which we need to be attracting more project investment to Australia.
- Will delay crew mobilisation for offshore projects, impacting productivity and increasing costs.
- Will impose a further unnecessary regulatory burden on an offshore resource industry that is already highly-regulated and facing increased global competition.

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