

MEDIA RELEASE

June 13, 2014

PPL levy would penalise employers already leading the way

IMPOSING a new tax on Australia's 3000 largest companies to fund the Abbott government's Paid Parental Leave (PPL) scheme would penalise those employers already leading the way in PPL practices, says Australia's resource industry.

"In an industry that pays among the highest wages in the country and actively seeks to recruit and retain more women, many of our larger members already have in place more attractive paid parental leave arrangements than the government's model," says Steve Knott, CEO of Australia's resource industry employer group, AMMA.

"Not only would these employers be paying for something they won't use, but the proposed PPL levy would penalise those who have been leading the way for years.

"This is a particularly bad idea when Australia is already one of the most expensive places in the world for new resource industry development and employers are under increasing competitive and cost pressures.

"We have been very consistent with the Coalition, both in government and in opposition, that a PPL scheme that imposes a new tax on our members won't be supported."

AMMA believes increased workforce participation in areas where women are underrepresented is best achieved through investment in attraction and retention programs.

Through its national initiative the Australian Women in Resources Alliance (AWRA), AMMA has enjoyed funding support from both the current and former Australian Government's in increasing the level of women in the wider resource industry.

"The resource industry acknowledges the ongoing support from the Australian Government that is assisting to increase our level of women employees. This is highly beneficial to both the resources sector and the national economy," Mr Knott says.

"Only last month the government announced it would provide a further \$440,000 in funding for the AWRA e-Mentoring program, an initiative that has had great success in connecting women in the resource industry with mentors across the country.

"Such initiatives, coupled with company-sponsored childcare, flexible working arrangements and return to work programs as well as innovative parental leave entitlements, have seen our industry make great in-roads in this area.

"Employers in our sector continue to advance on these initiatives even as we face declining commodity prices and a more challenging economic environment.

"Any government PPL scheme should be funded through consolidated national revenues and not pushed onto those employers already heavily investing in gender inclusion initiatives."

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