

MEDIA RELEASE

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IR review 'once in a generation' opportunity to get our system right

THE impending Productivity Commission review represents a historic 'once in a generation' opportunity to ensure Australia's industrial relations system can support the future aspirations and prosperity of our nation, says resource industry employer group AMMA.

"The resource industry strongly supports an independent, comprehensive and open review of Australia's industrial relations system. Such a review is critical to our nation's social aspirations and ongoing investment and employment growth," says AMMA chief executive Steve Knott.

"History reflects a swinging pendulum of changes to our industrial relations system purely on the basis of which political party is in government or opposition at the time. This has adversely impacted globally-exposed industries like the resource sector for too long.

"The upcoming Productivity Commission Review provides a national opportunity to rise above partisan party politics on industrial relations. It is time for a grown up debate and the discovery of common ground, long-term sustainable considerations.

"As is already occurring this week, we must not allow the process to be bogged down by political point scoring or cheap scare campaigns. We should all acknowledge the clear rationale for taking pause and having a proper, independent review of this complex and far-reaching area of regulation."

After reviewing the draft Terms of Reference alongside other key social partners including federal and state governments, employer and unions groups, AMMA has no doubt the review provides scope to bring about reform that will survive various political cycles.

AMMA believes pressure this week on the government to release the terms is not helpful.

"The government is on the record saying no major changes will occur before the 2016 election, so there is no urgency for this review to commence tomorrow, next week or next month for that matter," Mr Knott says.

"That said, it should commence this year and focus the parties' attention on finding common ground on matters including bargaining frameworks and processes, dispute resolution procedures, agreement making (including the interaction of individual and collective agreements) and the observance and enforcement of outcomes.

"Focusing on sustainable change that can achieve bipartisan support will provide the long-term stability needed to better trade and compete in the global marketplace.

"Only through a collaborative, open and honest approach can we embrace this opportunity for industrial relations to assist and not hinder our future national growth and prosperity."

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