

MEDIA RELEASE

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Coastal shipping reforms to better support Australian business on the global stage

AMMA (*Australian Mines and Metals Association*) – *The resource industry's employer group*

THE AUSTRALIAN Government's focus on more competitive and efficient coastal shipping, outlined at a Shipping Australia event in Sydney today, will better support resource employers operating in a fast-moving global marketplace, says AMMA.

In his address this afternoon, Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development Warren Truss released his department's *Australia Sea Freight 2012-13* research paper and reaffirmed his commitment to forthcoming coastal shipping reforms.

Welcoming the Minister's comments, AMMA chief executive Steve Knott says Australia's 'coastal highways' should be a competitive advantage for the nation, not a major cost drain on local employers.

"More effective and efficient coastal shipping regulation will better support Australian businesses competing in the global marketplace," Mr Knott says.

"Protectionist policy approaches to globalised industries are always dangerous, and the flaws in the former government's tiered licencing system are well documented.

"Such an approach does not create a more competitive and buoyant shipping sector and it does not assist Australian enterprises to better compete with the rest of the world.

"It was noted today that in just two years under Labor's *Coastal Trading Act 2012* the carrying capacity of Australia's coastal fleet dropped by 64 per cent.

"As outlined by the Minister, Labor's changes to Coastal Shipping were a sop to maritime unions and this protectionist dogma, masquerading as saving Australian jobs, actually has and is costing jobs in the broader Australian economy. This needs urgent redress."

Following the repeal of the carbon and mining taxes and slashing red tape for project approvals and exploration, Mr Knott says coastal shipping is another important step in removing key impediments to doing business in and with Australia.

"Australia's resource employers are facing increased global competitive pressures, falling commodity prices and domestic productivity challenges," he says.

"Coastal shipping reform is another piece to the puzzle in building a domestic policy framework that will see yet-to-be-determined resource projects approved and developed in Australia."

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