

MEDIA RELEASE

15 October, 2014

Maritime Union continues its misguided attacks on valuable resource projects

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

IT IS extremely disappointing to see the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) continue its irresponsible and misguided economic attacks on some of the most important parts of Australia's national resource industry, says AMMA.

The MUA has today commenced its five-day strike at Mermaid Marine's Dampier port operation in the Pilbara – one of the critical service and supply bases for the offshore oil and gas industry in the North West of Australia.

"For far too long the resource industry and the broader Australian community has put up with MUA threats to hold critical parts of our economy to ransom in pursuit of inflated wage increases, exorbitant allowances and attempts to control business operations," says Steve Knott, AMMA chief executive.

"In virtually every enterprise negotiation it is involved in across the resource and related sectors, the MUA has belligerently pursued unrealistic industrial claims well above those in other industries, with zero regard for the broader impacts of their actions and their impacts on working people.

"The offshore oil and gas industry has created thousands of employment opportunities and billions in economic value for Western Australia. The MUA's ideological campaign against major project operators and their contractors and service suppliers is particularly flawed and misguided."

In a separate matter also impacting the offshore oil and gas industry, AMMA continues to negotiate with the MUA for new agreements covering 21 vessel operator employers and about 2,500 employees in the maritime support sector.

"After more than 18 months, the union is still unable or unwilling to narrow its extensive shopping list of claims down to the core issues and give employers something to properly respond to. Rather, it has preferred to delay and frustrate proceedings to equip itself to take widespread strike action," Mr Knott says.

"Whether it is threatening strikes against either of the Pilbara's resource ports (Dampier and Port Hedland) or its disingenuous behaviour in the offshore maritime negotiations, the MUA must urgently reassess its approach and the wider impact it is having on one of the pillars of Australia's economy.

"Our message to the MUA is drop the strike threats, drop the misguided campaigns against nationally important hydrocarbons projects, and get serious about working with resource employers towards sustainable and fair outcomes for the industry and all who work within it."

MEDIA: Tom Reid, AMMA Media Manager, 0419 153 407 or Tom.Reid@amma.org.au.