

MEDIA RELEASE

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Productivity Commission's workplace relations recommendations must go further *(AMMA – Australian Mines and Metals Association)*

DRAFT recommendations to improve Australia's workplace relations framework contain some positive proposals but do not go far enough to tackle serious economic challenges facing our nation, resource industry employer group AMMA will tell a Productivity Commission (PC) hearing in Melbourne today.

[Speaking in support of AMMA's comprehensive reply](#) to the PC's *Draft Report into Australia's Workplace Relations Framework*, AMMA executive director, Scott Barklamb, will highlight shortcomings in the PC's response to addressing escalating problems with our workplace laws.

"Far from being 'fit for purpose' the current workplace relations system will not be able to buffer Australia against future challenges, nor allow employers and employees to seize the benefits of genuine flexibility and fairness," Mr Barklamb says.

"While the draft report proposes improvements in key areas such as new project agreement making, the PC has taken an overly cautious approach, canvassing mainly technical amendments to the Rudd/Gillard Fair Work system, and leaving other areas in the too hard basket.

"It is very disappointing that the PC has largely focussed on repairing and tweaking existing arrangements, rather than considering what our laws need to do and how best they can operate."

Mr Barklamb will encourage the PC to focus on key priorities for investors and employers, as part of a more fundamental examination of our workplace system and options for reform, including:

- Ensuring workplace agreements focus on the direct relationship between employers and employees, and not extraneous issues, such as union wish lists.
- Ensuring that above a safety-net, employers and employees can progress their interests and contribute to the productivity and competitiveness of enterprises.
- Broadening agreement making options through of a range of collective (union, non-union, and greenfields) and individual statutory agreements.
- Ensuring strike action can only be taken as a last resort.
- Ensuring union 'right of entry' visits are reasonable and take due account of operational needs.
- Ensuring protections against unfair dismissal and adverse action are genuinely balanced.

"It is imperative for our workplace relations system to better support growth and jobs, and the PC has a responsibility to deliver recommendations for real change for the future," Mr Barklamb says.

"AMMA looks forward to engaging further with the PC as it considers how our workplace relations framework can better equip Australia to tackle increasing economic pressures, and to seize opportunities for our future prosperity."

Over the past two years, at least 149 major resource projects valued at a minimum \$197 billion have failed to proceed in Australia.

[KPMG research](#) indicates that if key industrial relations reforms advocated by AMMA are implemented, they could add up to \$30.9 billion to Australia's GDP and create 36,000 extra jobs.

MEDIA: [Click here](#) for AMMA's introductory statement and full submission to the Productivity Commission. [Click here](#) for a summary document of AMMA's workplace relations priority areas for reform. For further information contact Kylie Sully - 0409 781 580; kylie.sully@amma.org.au.