

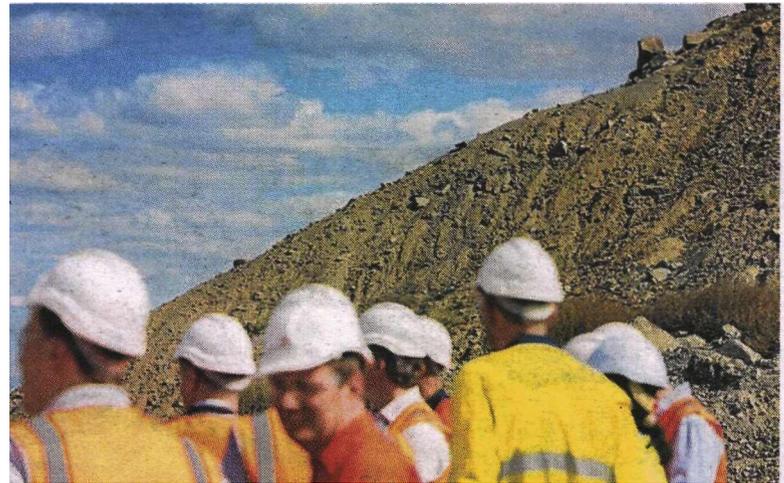


Less is more in labour market reforms

Jim Minifie's opinion piece (May 31) outlines some important measures to increase productivity and growth in a changing economy, but it's remarkable how often the Grattan Institute and other public policy "think tanks" overlook the pressing challenge of workplace relations reform.

Workplace reform may lack the political appeal of "innovation agendas", but the inflexibilities and unnecessary costs deriving from how we regulate work in Australia has every bit as large an impact on our national productivity and growth prospects as broader visionary statements. Rather than write off the resources sector we should be addressing clear problems that employers have repeatedly highlighted since the Fair Work Act came into effect in 2009, and reinvigorating resource operators with the confidence to invest, employ and fuel the next wave of resources growth.

Last year, KPMG modelled AMMA's proposed reforms as provided to the Productivity Commission's review of Australia's workplace relations system. It found that, if implemented, the reform suite could deliver up to \$30.9 billion and 36,000 additional jobs to Australia through productivity



Government should be reinvigorating resource operators with the confidence to invest, employ and fuel the next wave of resources growth. PHOTO: GLENN HUNT

benefits within the resources sector alone.

Of course, the benefits of such reforms are non-discriminatory and would flow to all industries including the burgeoning renewables sector and other innovative focus areas.

A "less is more" approach to labour market and economic regulation, one

that minimises the role of government and maximises direct engagement between employers and their employees, will greatly support the business community in tackling our nation's future challenges.

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Steve Knott, chief executive
Australian Mines and Metals Association