

MEDIA RELEASE

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Resource employers intervene on desperate Maritime Union power grab

AMMA – Australia's Resource Industry Employer Group

THE Maritime Union of Australia's latest play to expand its influence in the resource industry is a 'desperate' move that risks creating demarcation disputes and industrial unrest on ports and major resource projects, says AMMA.

AMMA, with the backing of its membership, has filed a formal intervention urging the Fair Work Commission (FWC) not to entertain an application by the MUA to change its eligibility rules to target employees at stevedoring and logistics operations historically covered by other unions.

"This has been widely viewed as a desperate move by the MUA to win existing unionised members at the cost of its co-unions and well-established demarcation agreements," Amanda Mansini, AMMA's director of workplace relations, says.

"Our members in the maritime, stevedoring, oil and gas, mining and logistics sectors are united that the MUA's attempt to expand its influence in these areas would not be in the public interest.

"The union cannot seriously argue, given its history of militancy and law breaking, that it is better placed to represent employees of these operations than the longstanding unions in these sectors.

"All such a bid would do is create the type of demarcation disputes not seen to this extent since the mid-90s, and seriously threaten the stability of Australia's wharves which see \$1.2 billion worth of trade each day and are critical to the national economy."

AMMA has officially filed a Notice of Objection to the FWC opposing the rule changes. While the details in the union's application are scant, the significance of its proceeding include:

- a direct impact on employers, through disruption to current ways of working (dealing with the MUA in more instances including bargaining, right of entry and other matters where other unions already have coverage).
- a direct impact on employees, through likely demarcation disputes between union members which in turn would disrupt current ways of working.
- given the pending MUA / CFMEU merger, there is potential for this rule change to result in the newly merged union having the means to attempt to exercise unparalleled control of the resources supply chain.

AMMA's representations on this matter are strongly supported by Ports Australia, whose CEO David Anderson says: "Australia's ports are most concerned that the MUA's foray into the historic territory of other unions will have a significant destabilizing impact on critical trades and our workplaces."

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