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New super-militant union shuts down Australia's busiest port

HUNDREDS of stevedores walked off the job this morning, shutting down Port of Melbourne in a move described as “irresponsible, damaging and reckless” by Australian Resources and Energy Group AMMA.

This drastic and illegal action appeared to be in support of construction union bosses currently facing blackmail charges over their role in the 2013 Grocon dispute. It comes shortly after the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union received the Fair Work Commission's (FWC) approval to merge with the Maritime Union of Australia and create the CFMMEU.

“Today's events demonstrate how coordinated industrial action between the CFMMEU's construction and maritime divisions can have immediate and damaging impacts on the economy, the community and our international reputation as a reliable place to invest and do business,” Steve Knott, AMMA Chief Executive, said.

“Australia's ports are the gates to our economy, aiding everything from large-scale commodity exports to trade for small and medium businesses. They are also critical to individual members of the public accessing household products and essential medical supplies.

“It is extremely disappointing that just as the Australian economy is starting to turn a corner – allowing our federal parliamentarians to debate how best to allocate strong national revenues – the new super-militant union chooses to threaten this growth by slamming shut the gates to our trade.

“This is exactly the type of damaging, coordinated law-breaking that AMMA has warned of repeatedly in our FWC proceedings appealing the creation of this super-militant union. It's a stark reality check for anyone who believed the unions' assurances that it would not lead to this type of coordinated industrial action.

“AMMA does not accept that recklessly threatening economic growth, trade and investment in Australia should be standard practice for this new super-militant union. This is why we are continuing to appeal its approval in the national interest.”

The illegal port shutdown also coincided with a mass rally in Melbourne CBD organised by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) in support of its extreme-left “Change the Rules” campaign.

“The current secretary of the ACTU is on the public record openly condoning unionists who break laws they view as being unjust,” Mr Knott said.

“We are left to assume that Australia's laws protecting people against illegal actions such as blackmail, threats, bullying and damaging strikes are the types of laws which the ACTU believes are okay to be broken.”

Note: AMMA's appeal against the Fair Work Commission's approval of the CFMMEU merger is currently being considered by a Full Bench of the Commission.

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