

15 February 2019

A step towards fixing union abuse of workplace entry rights

MEASURES to better enforce lawful and responsible use of entry permits are a step in the right direction to fixing the burden of excessive and disruptive union visits to Australian workplaces, says the peak employer group for the resources and energy industry.

Australian Resources and Energy Group AMMA has long called for reform of the Fair Work system for union workplace entry, which in practice sees unions handed near unlimited access to workplaces primarily seeking to recruit new members.

“The Australian Government’s intention to overhaul union workplace entry permits is welcome and long overdue. It shouldn’t be too much to ask, in 2019, that authorisation to enter a private workplace involves photo ID and lists any relevant conditions,” AMMA Acting CEO, Tara Diamond, said.

“This is a welcome first step towards addressing the longstanding issue of excessive union workplace entries under the Fair Work Act, and will be particularly beneficial to the building and construction sector which has seen almost-daily abuse of these rights by union representatives.

“However, employers still face fundamental issues with the Fair Work system for union site entry that can only be addressed through legislative reform.

“Resources and energy employers continue to be unfairly exposed to the absurd costs, delays, productivity impacts and safety issues associated with the thousands of site entry requests they receive each year.

“When the current rules were introduced in 2009, one major resources project received 217 entry requests within four months. Over the following six months, this increased to 450. Another project received 17 visits in just 24 hours, while a third received more than 300 in 90 days.

“The system must be reviewed and overhauled to properly balance fair and appropriate access by employee representatives with the cost, disruption and productivity impacts of unfettered visits by unions seeking to boost their membership numbers.”

A 2018 [survey](#) of resources and energy employers revealed more than 50 per cent had their workplace adversely affected by the frequency and impact of union access. In 2016, [KPMG research](#) estimated the cost of union visits to 100 major projects to be more than \$5 million annually.

Watch this video to learn more about the impact of union site entry under the Fair Work Act:

MEDIA CONTACT:
Brad Thompson
0409 781 580

