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Productivity Commission echoes employer concerns with industry bargaining, strikes

Australia's resources and energy employers welcome the Productivity Commission echoing their concerns with proposals to allow multi-employer bargaining and legally protected industry-wide strikes, with a new report warning of significant damage to the national economy.

As reported by [The Australian](#) (page 1, September 18), AREEA Chief Executive Steve Knott last month wrote to ACTU President Michele O'Neil detailing the resources and energy industry's grave concerns with the union movement's push to allow for multi-employer bargaining, backed by industry-crippling strikes.

The Productivity Commission's [latest report](#) has reinforced the sector's concerns, including that multi-employer bargaining would damage competition in the economy, disrupt supply chains and lead to unsustainable and cascading wage pressures.

"In recent weeks the ACTU and a number of its affiliates have made it very clear that they see the enterprise bargaining system allowing for claims to be pursued across multiple employers and for strikes to be coordinated across multiple businesses and potentially entire industries," Mr Knott said.

"It shouldn't take a significant report from the Productivity Commission to inform people that this would be devastating for Australian businesses and the economy.

"However if there was any doubt, the Commission's new report has made it abundantly clear this is a terrible idea; one the Albanese Government should not even remotely be entertaining.

"The unions believe the enterprise bargaining system is all about gaining leverage against employers and holding them to ransom for inflated wage outcomes. It's no wonder businesses have exited the system in droves and have no interest in renegotiating expired enterprise agreements.

"The Productivity Commission's view is that bargaining reforms need to look at improving workplace practices, lifting productivity, freeing up innovation and technology advances, and facilitating greater enterprise level flexibilities.

"If the enterprise bargaining system provided for such outcomes, many employers would re-enter the system and have little issue with providing above average pay increases that would see their employees share in productivity and commercial gains."

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