

# Media release

## Support industrial relations reform to back mining jobs

### Statement from Tania Constable, Chief Executive Officer

The Morrison Government's proposed amendments to the *Fair Work Act* will help ensure that Australian mining keeps providing highly paid, highly skilled and secure jobs across Australia.

Improving the approval process for enterprise agreements – including by accelerating agreements supported by a majority of employees and stipulating how the Fair Work Commission should apply the better-off-overall test – means more consistent approval times for similar agreements, more certainty for employers and faster creation of jobs and wage increases in exchange for productivity gains.

Allowing greenfields agreements of up to eight years for projects worth \$500 million or more will encourage investment in new mining projects by removing the uncertainty of having to renegotiate employment conditions mid-stream.

This reform is good for projects that involve underground mining, minerals processing or more complex project plans, which may take more than four years to proceed from construction to execution to completion.

Australia's mining competitors in the United States and Canada have access to enterprise agreements covering the life of a project; yet in Australia all enterprise agreements – including greenfields agreements – are currently limited to four years.

The MCA has identified 31 minerals projects at or above the \$500 million threshold that have completed a feasibility study and are actively progressing their plans towards starting construction within the next four-to-five years. The combined \$31 billion in investment flowing from these projects could create more than 17,000 construction jobs and 11,000 ongoing operating jobs across Australia.

Extending the option of longer greenfields agreements to nationally significant projects with a capital value between \$250 million and \$500 million will help unlock additional investment and jobs.

While 85 per cent of mining workers are permanent employees, the government's decision to define casual employment in the *Fair Work Act* – and clarify the entitlements owing to casuals in national employment standards – is a positive development.

The Industrial Relations Omnibus Bill will reduce uncertainty and inflexibility in workplace relations and make Australia more internationally competitive as a destination for mining investment.

The resources sector directly employs 240,000 people, mostly in regional and remote Australia and average full-time earnings in resources are \$144,000 a year – 58 per cent above the average for all industries.

The bill is an important step towards a more modern and dynamic workplace relations system.

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