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Rinehart plan to offshore Australian jobs shows world's richest woman cares only for profits: unions

The mining industry must be investing in secure, permanent jobs for Australians before resorting to importing guest workers, say unions.

The ACTU says the Government's decision to cave in to Gina Rinehart's demands to bring 1700 overseas guest workers to Australia without fully attempting to find local workers for the Roy Hill iron ore project in the Pilbara is short-sighted and risks costing Australians jobs.

ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said the Government's decision was premature and risked leaving Australian workers out in the cold, without any process even in place to assess the resources sector's skilled labour requirements.

"This push by Gina Rinehart shows the mining industry is not interested in paying its way and is not interested in returning benefits to Australians," Mr Oliver said.

"The few multi-billionaires who control so much of our country's natural resources wealth are only interested in their own profits and how much they can squeeze out of the minerals that belong to the Australian people.

"The mining boom is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to invest in secure jobs, skills and building new communities that will drive Australia's economic growth into the future.

"It must not be squandered by mining moguls seeking to fatten their profits at the expense of the Australian community and workers.

"This is a very disappointing decision from the Government and we will be seeking to meet with the relevant Ministers as early as possible to discuss the ramifications of this decision

"It is now even more imperative that a jobs board is established to enable thorough market testing of the skilled labour requirements of the resources sector.

"We have had no independent evidence to back up claims by mining magnates like Mrs Rinehart that there aren't enough Australian workers to meet the needs of future resources projects."

Mr Oliver said it was even more disappointing that today's decision had been made by a Government that had recently shown positive support for Australian jobs, particularly in the manufacturing industry.

"Australians in sectors outside resources have experienced a recent flood of job losses. Where is the proof that Mrs Rinehart has exhausted all opportunities to give Australian workers jobs, or any moves to encourage young people into training?" he said.

"This is the world's richest woman making herself richer and richer on the back of minerals that Australians own, yet she can't even be bothered to offer locals jobs. At the same time, there remain outstanding concerns about the misuse of 457 visas by employers."

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