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## Jobs Board will ensure Australian workers have opportunities in booming resources sector

The introduction of a new Resources Sector Jobs Board will provide greater assurances that Australians will have access to jobs in the booming mining industry as billions of dollars of new projects are developed, say unions.

ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said the application of the Jobs Board to the Roy Hill iron ore project in the Pilbara would go some way to addressing concerns that more than 1700 guest workers would be brought into Australia without first offering positions to Australian workers.

He said the electronic Jobs Board would provide safeguards to ensure that resources companies explored options of employing Australian workers before seeking to use temporary migration.

“We are pleased that the Government has responded to the initial concerns raised by unions about the Roy Hill Enterprise Migration Agreement,” Mr Oliver said.

“Those concerns arose from a lack of assurances that any process was in place to assess the resources sector’s skilled and semi-skilled labour requirements.

“At the time of the announcement, there had been no independent evidence to back up claims by mining magnates like Gina Rinehart that there aren’t enough Australian workers to meet the needs of future resources projects.”

“We have also had concerns about temporary migration to prevent the exploitation of foreign workers and to ensure they are afforded the same rights, protections and conditions as Australian workers.

“All unions also share the same concerns that we want to ensure that Australian workers and Australian jobs benefit from the resources boom and are given opportunities for employment in WA’s mining sector.”

Mr Oliver said job losses in the eastern states meant working in the resources sector had become an attractive option to many Australian workers.

“There’s no doubt that there are skilled Australians keen and willing to work in the mining sector,” Mr Oliver said.

“Some will want to move to the resource-rich regions permanently, while others will want to fly in and out on a rotating roster.

“The forecast size of expansion of the sector may require employers to look beyond our shores, and unions have never opposed skilled migration, but it is essential that opportunities be given to local workers, and the Jobs Board will help to ensure that.”

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