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Stand firm on gains for workers and local communities from mining tax, urge unions

Australian businesses should bear the cost of any compromise with the mining lobby over the new resources tax, not workers and local communities, say unions.

Cuts to business taxes should be reduced or abandoned if revenue from the proposed mining tax is substantially less than initially forecast.

The ACTU and mining unions say any changes to the proposed Resource Super Profits Tax must preserve revenues needed to help fund the increase in superannuation from 9% to 12% and the improvements in infrastructure, especially in mining communities.

These are much-needed reforms that will benefit all Australians, said ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence.

“Big mining companies making mega profits out of Australia’s natural resources must pay their fair share of tax and put something back into the community,” Mr Lawrence said.

“The RSPT makes economic sense and will be good for working Australians.

“The Gillard Government has shown a willingness to engage in meaningful and good faith negotiations with the mining industry to achieve a consensus on the tax.

“This may result in some changes to the new tax.

“But the bottom line must be that revenues intended for increased superannuation and regional infrastructure must not be put at risk.

“The proposed increase to 12% superannuation is essential to provide adequate retirement incomes and strengthen the national economy as it faces the challenges of an ageing population.

“And communities in regional Australia – particularly in mining areas – are crying out for new infrastructure such as roads, schools, and hospitals.”

“Workers in the mining sector are sick and tired of seeing multinational companies making billions of dollars of profits, but not paying their fair share of tax,” Mr Lawrence said.

“They especially want to see more put into their local communities.”

Mr Lawrence said new official data on job vacancies had ripped the credibility out of the mining lobby’s hysterical claims that the RSPT would cost jobs and undermine the industry.

“The mining industry was trying to hire 6200 workers in May – after the tax had been announced,” Mr Lawrence said.

“They’d hardly be doing that if they truly believed the RSPT was going to ruin the industry. Their multi-million dollar, misleading scare campaign has been shameful.

“Their opposition to this tax is further proof that big business and the Liberals will always side against a fair go for working Australians.”

Media contact:

Mark Phillips ph (03) 8676 7266 or 0422 009 011; mphillips@actu.org.au