

MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 29 October 2015

TURNBULL TURNS HIS BACK ON AUSTRALIAN SHIPBUILDERS.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has failed his first serious test of political leadership by turning his back on Australian shipbuilders and placing an order for a new Australian icebreaker offshore.

Just a day after the ASC shipyard in Adelaide announced its intention to lay off another 45 workers, and following intensive lobbying for new shipbuilding orders by the South Australian Government, Mr Turnbull has revealed his manufacturing industry policy is no better than Tony Abbott's.

"This is proof that the new Prime Minister doesn't understand the crisis that the Coalition has created in the shipbuilding industry," said Glenn Thompson, Assistant National secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU).

"It's no use blaming Labor for the state of shipbuilding in Australia. This Government has had an opportunity to build the icebreaker here and has failed to do so," Mr Thompson said.

"The last Australian icebreaker was built for the Antarctic Division by the Forgacs yard in Newcastle and there is no reason why Australian industry could not complete another similar vessel," he said. "Except that the Coalition Government excluded Australian companies from taking part in the tender process."

Mr Thompson said the shipbuilding industry was in crisis because its only customer was the Federal Government and this decision shows the Turnbull Government was as short sighted as its predecessor.

"The new icebreaker is a billion dollar project that should be built here in Australia," Mr Thompson said.

"Malcolm Turnbull is touring Australia talking up the need for innovation and enterprise and yet here he is sending jobs offshore as the Australian shipbuilding industry withers on the vine because of a lack of new orders."

"Mr Turnbull needs to justify to Australian workers who are losing their jobs why his government has failed to back a local build."

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