

Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union

MEDIA RELEASE



Friday 12 February, 2016

TURNBULL AT THE HELM AS SHIPBUILDING CRISIS DEEPENS

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has been labeled the Grim Reaper of Australian shipbuilding jobs as a second shipyard nears closure in the space of a fortnight.

On Thursday, BAE Williamstown announced another 40 job losses at its shipyard, leaving only a handful of workers at the facility. The decision follows the closure of the Forgacs shipyard in Newcastle last week.

Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) Assistant National Secretary, Glenn Thompson, slammed the lack of action by the Prime Minister.

"This is Malcolm Turnbull's own Holden moment," said Mr Thompson in reference to the closure of the auto industry under Tony Abbott's leadership.

"Mr Turnbull had plenty to say about the poor performance of the Abbott Government as he launched his coup to take over the cabinet room. He promised the public the Government would lift its game under his leadership," said Mr Thompson.

"Shipbuilder held out hope that new leadership would mean a new direction for naval shipbuilding. Rather than give the industry a hand up, the PM has given shipbuilders a slap in the face."

"Promises of a 'continuous build' program for the shipbuilding industry have so far proven to be empty words. And with no new orders from the Federal Government, skilled shipbuilding workers around Australia are being laid off."

Mr Thompson said that full closure of the Williamstown facility was imminent.

"The Government was keen to promote the completion of two huge Landing Helicopter Docks, HMAS Canberra and HMAS Adelaide. These amphibious assault ships were the largest vessels ever built for the RAN, assembled and fitted out at BAE in Williamstown."

"But what thanks do the workers get? If the Prime Minister was fair dinkum about maintaining a shipbuilding capability in Australia he would fix the mess Tony Abbott and Kevin Andrews left."

Mr Thompson said unemployed shipbuilding workers were not buying the PM's buzz words.

"Agile, nimble, and innovative don't mean much when you've just lost your job," Mr

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“This Government is exhibiting a disgraceful disregard for our national security, major defence contractors and the workers who will now most likely be lost to the industry.”

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