

MEDIA RELEASE

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Hydro Maintenance Workers Facing Uncertain Future

Maintenance employees responsible for the upkeep of Hydro turbines face an uncertain future as the dam levels in the state hit record lows.

Alstom, the company contracted by Hydro Tasmania to maintain the turbines, has refused to confirm the ongoing employment of a dozen workers at the maintenance facility in Cambridge. In late 2015, already half the workforce was laid off as a result of continued delays by Hydro Tasmania on maintenance projects.

John Short, Tasmanian Secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) calls on Hydro Tasmania and the Tasmanian Government to intervene to ensure the ongoing employment of the workers.

“These are the only workers in the state that are capable of doing this essential maintenance work. Sacking them now would be the equivalent of a tradie selling their tools,” said Mr Short.

“The Cambridge facility is the only purpose built facility in the state able to undertake this important work. If Hydro and the state government don't intervene and ensure these workers and this facility are kept, then maintenance work on Hydro's turbines will likely be sent to the mainland,” he said.

Last week, Hydro Tasmania conceded that we are now in “unchartered waters” as dam levels drop below 15% for the first time in history.

“Tasmania is facing an unprecedented crisis. Now is not the time to be considering letting the workers go,” he said.

“Engineers have confirmed that as the dam levels hit record lows, the likelihood of rocks and sediment entering the turbines increases dramatically. These maintenance workers are going to be needed more than ever,” said Mr Short.

The ongoing energy crisis has continued to highlight the failure of the Tasmanian Government to properly manage the energy needs of the state.

“The Premier needs to intervene urgently to make sure these maintenance workers' jobs are secure,” said Mr Short.

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