

# Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union

## MEDIA RELEASE



### British Ship Talks Must Deliver Australian Jobs

**Monday 2 February 2015**

The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) has called on Defence Minister Kevin Andrews to ensure that any agreement with the British on naval procurement delivers Australian jobs.

Australia-United Kingdom Ministerial Consultations talks will occur today in Sydney between Foreign Minister Julie Bishop, Defence Minister Kevin Andrews and Britain's Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Philip Hammond and Secretary of State for Defence Michael Fallon.

The union understands that defence procurement and cooperation will be central to the talks, including the possibility of a partnership to deliver Australia's future frigates.

"The Government has acknowledged that we need to bridge the jobs gap – the 'valley of death' – which is about to occur in our national shipbuilding industry," said AMWU Assistant National Secretary Glenn Thompson.

"An accelerated timeline, bringing forward the 8 future frigates, could help to save thousands of jobs in shipyards around the country.

"A partnership with Britain could be a sensible solution, provided that the build was conducted here, in Australian shipyards.

"The design could be modeled off the British Navy's Type 26 Frigate – but the build must occur here in Australia for there to be any chance of jobs being saved."

The union is calling on the Government to ensure that the frigate block work was brought forward, in order to stem imminent job losses.

"We are on the brink of seeing mass job losses in yards around the country – in Newcastle, Williamstown in Melbourne, and in Adelaide particularly," said Mr Thompson.

"Moving this block work on the frigates forward would be sensible first step in ensuring that we don't lose these vital skills.

"Once Australia loses our skilled shipbuilders we will never get the capacity back. This is a question of sovereign capability and national security – not just jobs.

"Do we really want to be an island nation that doesn't have the ability to service our Navy?

"We hope that the new Minister for Defence, Kevin Andrews, makes sensible decisions regarding naval shipbuilding – and decides to move the frigates forward to be built in Australia, and ensures that our future submarine fleet is built here too."

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