



**AMWU**

AUSTRALIAN  
MANUFACTURING  
WORKERS' UNION

# UNION NEWS

Friday 8 April Vol. 10 Issue 7

**Paul Bastian**, AMWU National Secretary



## PYNE FAILS Q&A PRESSURE TEST ON SUBMARINES

**A**n AMWU shipbuilding delegate put Industry Minister Christopher Pyne on the spot during the ABC's Q&A program this week over the failure of the Turnbull Government to rule out an overseas build of the next generation of submarines.

After being pushed by AMWU delegate Matthew Primiero, the Minister was forced to concede that a decision on the build was "very likely" before the federal election.

Mr Pyne again failed to rule out the \$50 billion sub project being done totally overseas or as a hybrid build, despite a commitment by the Labor Opposition at the AMWU's rally in Adelaide last weekend to a full Australian-based build.

Mr Primiero, who works at ASC North in Adelaide, was applauded when he asked Mr Pyne why the Turnbull Government would not take the option of an overseas or hybrid build of the submarines off the table for the three competitors.

Mr Pyne replied the "process must go through its process" or else the Government may be "open to all sorts of legal ramifications."

Mr Primiero told AMWU News the



**Q&A: Matthew Primiero asks the question.**

minister had "danced round the question" because the Japanese, French DCNS and German TKNS tenders had all committed to building in Australia if the Government wished.

"I want to see ink to paper first," the AMWU delegate said on Q&A.

Mr Pyne said he believed the announcement would happen before the election "because I don't think you can expect anyone in Australia to go to vote without knowing what that big investment is going to do and where it's going to be."

A ReachTEL poll of 1200 voters in Mr Pyne's seat of Sturt and the neighbouring Liberal seat of Hindmarsh showed about 90 per cent of voters want the subs built in Adelaide.

The poll, commissioned by the AMWU, showed Mr Pyne had lost six per cent of voter support

in Sturt since the 2013 election and is vulnerable to losing the seat, as is Hindmarsh MP Matt Williams.

AMWU Assistant National Secretary Glenn Thompson said the union would hold the Turnbull Government to announcing the subs' builder and location before the election, to ensure it was fully accountable to voters.

"Voters know that Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey lost the car industry and they are warning Malcolm Turnbull that they will turn on the Coalition if South Australian shipbuilding jobs are sent overseas," he said.

At an AMWU rally in Adelaide last weekend, Opposition Leader Bill Shorten told 250 union members that the re-election of the Turnbull Government would spell disaster for the manufacturing industry.

"This submarine battle is not just about the submarines," he said. "It's actually about do we want to be a country that makes things in Australia?" ■



**Minister Pyne feels the heat.**



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## BALD STATEMENT OF UNION SUPPORT

**A**MWU organiser Colin Muir had his biggest haircut ever this week to show his support for union delegate Russell Phippen, who is fighting a serious illness.

The razor was let loose on Colin's curls at Victorian auto parts maker FMP as part of a \$5000 fund raising effort by our 120 members at the Ballarat site.

Russell is receiving treatment for cancer and his union mates wanted to show him tangible support by financially helping him and his family, possibly to take a future break away together when he is well enough.

Colin Muir offered to also have



Before: Colin Muir was feeling sheepish about being shorn.



After: Russell Phippen (right) was impressed with Colin's new look of solidarity.

his hair shaved when Russell needed chemotherapy, to show solidarity and give that extra incentive for the union community to reach the \$5000 target.

"I was rather attached to my hair, receding as it was, and hoped to keep it for a few more years at least but helping out Russell was a great reason to test out whether it can ever grow back," Colin said.

"Russell's been at FMP for about 30 years, you wouldn't get a better bloke or union member."

"He's our AMWU delegate on Ballarat Trades Hall, cooks the union barbecue at the Begonia Festival and is held in great affection by all his mates at work."

Members at FMP kicked in generously for Russell, as did Ballarat Trades Hall and the AMWU so the total reached \$4200.

WageGuard, which is giving Russell Phippen peace of mind through income protection, readily pitched in an extra \$1000.

Guy Ackling, acting as shop committee head, said delegates were missing Russell's experience and wisdom as they negotiated a new FMP enterprise agreement.

"I've taken over from him and really understand how dedicated he's been, how much work he does – he'll do anything for you and we want to see him back, well."

Russell was unable to attend the shearing, but Colin later visited him at his home.

"He was hanging it a bit on me for my baldness, but was absolutely overwhelmed when I pulled out the donation from the union and WageGuard," Colin Muir said.

## PM MUST STEP UP TO ARRIUM STEEL PLATE

**T**he AMWU is calling on the Turnbull Government to show leadership by underpinning the continuing operations of Arrium in order to protect thousands of jobs and give the company time to trade its way out of trouble.

Administrators called in by the Arrium board have said it's business as usual at the Whyalla steel smelter, mines and associated Onesteel production facilities across eastern Australia.

"They've said it's business as usual and that's what we need the Turnbull Government to guarantee, said AMWU National Assistant Secretary Glenn Thompson.

"Relying on the market mechanism to work out whether Arrium's operation and the town of Whyalla survive won't cut it."

He said securing the operations at Whyalla must be seen in the wider context of securing the nation's only home-grown source of construction steel.

"The implications of allowing a large steelmaker to go under can't be underestimated – particularly ahead of a federal election," he said.

SA Assistant State Secretary Colin Fenney said it underlined the necessity for the Turnbull Government to carry through on backing a target of 90 per cent Australian steel in all government projects – federal, state and local.

The AMWU will also be putting the highest priority on ensuring that guarantees by the administrators yesterday to workers that their entitlements would be prioritized above unsecured creditors are backed up legally, in writing.

Australian banks are among mainly unsecured creditors owed a total of \$2.8 billion in debts by Arrium, but the \$500 million owing to its workers in entitlements must take priority, Mr Thompson said.

Workers at Whyalla steelworks and company mines in the region were spoken to in meetings by the administrators Grant Thornton yesterday.

AMWU delegate at the Iron Duke mine, Andrew Mayne, said workers realised the "time of truth" had arrived at Arrium after years of incompetent management investments.

"They couldn't just blame the iron ore prices and the steel price for this, they've made bad moves and there's a feeling the administrators could not possibly do any worse in trying to sort the operation out," he said.

He said workers had had "a gutful" of wage cuts and sacrifices when labour costs were only a small part of the entire financial picture at Arrium.

"We're really worried, in 6-8 weeks it could go either way, but while the administrators are here we need the Turnbull Government to support the steel industry," Mr Mayne said.

Mr Mayne was part of a union delegation to Canberra last month backing the AMWU's call to the Senate Inquiry into the steel industry.

The Senate Committee sat in Whyalla this week, as 500 worried residents rallied in the town.

The AMWU is calling for tightening of anti-dumping and steel quality regulations, a government Steel Investment Council to assist with capital funding and establishment of a clean energy program.



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