

Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union

MEDIA RELEASE



BAE FORCED TO PULL THE PIN ON TENDER

Tuesday 16 June 2015

The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) is calling on the Abbott Government to recognise the crisis in Australian shipbuilding as BAE Maritime looks certain to pull out of Williamstown.

Today's announcement by BAE Systems, that they will not be tendering for the 21 Pacific Patrol Boats, proves that the Government has mismanaged the tender process and the Australian naval shipbuilding industry.

This leaves the yard with no work after the current AWD contracts.

BAE itself has acknowledged that 'we were not able to overcome the biggest challenge facing the Maritime business – the timing of the program.'

"This Government made big promises to get itself elected and has sat on their hands ever since and done nothing to give any certainty to the industry," said Glenn Thompson, AMWU Assistant National Secretary.

"BAE Systems – like all Australian shipbuilding industry – needs a continuous build program of work to survive. They openly acknowledge this is what is sealing the nail in the coffin – lack of Government support.

"BAE has been ignored by this Government which has failed to recognise the inevitable, it is unacceptable for industry to operate without certainty, without orders for new ships, the shipbuilding industry would face catastrophic shutdowns and job losses," Mr Thompson said.

Mr Thompson said the AMWU had been working closely with BAE Systems to alert the Government to the crisis the industry faces. Evidence to the Senate Inquiry over the past year has clearly demonstrated the industry was facing the "Valley of Death," where jobs were lost because the government had failed to place firm orders for new ships.

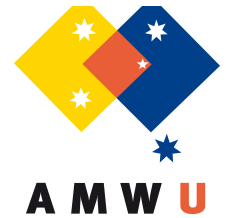
"Once workers leave the industry and get other jobs, their skills will be lost from shipbuilding, perhaps forever," he said.

"Workers, shipbuilding companies and the Union have been calling on the Government to see sense and implement a continuous build program which is the only way to make the industry sustainable.

"They have failed to listen and failed to act.

"It is a tragedy for the workers and their families that so many jobs are now on the block by the poor performance of a Government that can't see that our national security would be threatened if Australia's shipbuilding capability was lost.

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“Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey lost the car industry and now they look like doing the same thing to shipbuilding,” Mr Thompson said.

Glenn Thompson is available for interview.

Workers will be available at BAE Williamstown (Melbourne)

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