

# Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union



## MEDIA RELEASE

### **Abbott Government must act to sustain naval shipbuilding industry.**

Wednesday 1 July 2015

The latest report of the Senate Inquiry into naval shipbuilding paints a grim picture of the perilous future faced by the industry under the Abbott Government.

The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) agrees with the Committee's conclusion that a viable industry that has already invested in skills and shipbuilding facilities, will become unsustainable if the Government fails to implement a long term 30 year continuous build program.

"The Senate report is a scathing indictment of the Federal Government's failure to do anything to support jobs in the industry or to sustain Australian Defence companies," said AMWU Assistant National Secretary, Glenn Thompson.

"It is clear that unless Tony Abbott and his Defence Minister Kevin Andrews heed the Senate Committee's warnings, stop the talk and ACT, more jobs will be lost," he said.

Workers at BAE System's shipyard at Williamstown in Victoria and the Forgas's yard in Newcastle, are already being laid off because there are no new orders being placed by the Abbott Government, which the Committee points out, is their only customer.

The Senate Committee has exposed what those in the industry are already well aware of: that "it is unacceptable for the sole customer to criticise the industry for poor performance when many of the problems originate from a lack of government foresight."

The AMWU endorses the Committee's recommendations that urgent steps must be taken to reopen the tender for two naval replenishment vessels; that 12 future submarines should be built and maintained in Australia; that the Pacific Patrol Boats program be fast tracked; and that the construction of future frigates be brought forward.

"This is an industry that stands ready to take on the full range of shipbuilding projects for the Navy, that has developed a highly skilled and capable workforce, and that relies on the Federal Government to maintain a constant flow of orders to survive," Mr Thompson said.

"It is unacceptable for the Abbott Government to subject the shipbuilding industry to the 'feast or famine cycles' inflicted upon it in the past."

"We agree wholeheartedly with the Committee's view that the Government could and should be doing more to maintain a viable shipbuilding industry in Australia and that must be a continuous build."

"But time is running out and unless this Government comes to its senses, shipbuilding will be headed in the same direction as the car industry and the Coalition will pay for its appalling neglect of Australia's shipbuilders at the next election."

Glenn Thompson is available for interview.

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