

Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union

MEDIA RELEASE



MORE JOBS LOST AS ABBOTT GOVERNMENT FAILS TO ORDER NEW NAVY SHIPS.

Friday 17 July 2015

The Abbott Government's failure to address the crisis in naval shipbuilding has seen 101 jobs lost today at ASC Shipbuilding in Adelaide.

The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) is concerned about the future of more the 2,500 workers remaining at ASC as the Abbott Government appears unwilling to address the crisis in the shipbuilding industry.

SA Assistant Secretary Colin Fenney said the contractors who have lost their jobs today include fabricators, boilermakers and pipefitters who have been employed on the Air Warfare Destroyer (AWD) project.

"These workers are victims of the Federal Government's failure to recognise the need for a continuous building program to maintain our shipbuilding capability," Mr Fenney said.

"Tony Abbott claims he's going to create 500 shipbuilding jobs in Adelaide but unless new orders are placed soon, the jobs of thousands of workers already in the industry will be at risk," he said.

Shipbuilders at ASC in Adelaide, BAE Maritime in Victoria and Forgacs in Newcastle, NSW, have been losing their jobs because Tony Abbott and Defence Minister Kevin Andrews have failed to understand the need to maintain the industry's skill base.

"By failing to place orders for new navy ships, Tony Abbott is running down the workforce and as those workers move off to other industries, their expertise will be lost," Mr Fenney said.

"The Abbott Government is creating a situation where we won't have the skills in the industry and it will take years to retrain new workers to replace those who have left."

Mr Fenney said South Australia's unemployment rate of 8.2 per cent was at a 15 year high and with no new shipbuilding orders forthcoming, more jobs were at risk in the shipbuilding supply chain.

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Mr Fenney said the Federal Government was clearly to blame for the jobs lost today because of its failure to take the option outlined in the 2013 Defence White Paper to order a fourth AWD.

“It’s time for the Government to stop playing politics and to recognise that Australia’s national security depends on a strong and viable shipbuilding industry,” Mr Fenney said.

He said reports the Government was considering whether to centre shipbuilding in Adelaide to the detriment of shipyards in Newcastle and Williamstown was unsustainable because ASC did not have the capacity to meet all Australia’s naval shipbuilding needs.

“The Abbott Government needs to wake up to itself and bring forward the Future Frigate program, place orders for the Pacific Patrol boats, reopen the tender on naval supply ships to local industry and honour the Coalition’s election commitment to build 12 submarines at ASC in Adelaide,” he said.

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