

Shipbuilders Need More Certainty Before They Celebrate

Tuesday 11 August

Media Conference:

Tuesday 11 August | 12.15 | Senate Courtyard

Speakers will include shipbuilders from around Australia

Shipbuilders from around Australia are in Canberra this week meeting with Coalition Members of Parliament and Cross Benchers to talk about the naval shipbuilding industry.

Following the Prime Minister's \$39 billion announcement last week regarding patrol boats and frigates, the shipbuilders will be explaining to MPs that although this announcement is welcome, questions remain.

"We're here to ask Government members to clarify to us exactly what the Prime Minister meant when he noted that a "maximum Australian build" will be a guiding principle in these contracts," said AMWU National Secretary Paul Bastian.

"Although the announcement is welcome – and a big win for shipbuilders – there are questions about the Government's plans for workers in NSW and VIC, and also around the future of the Submarines.

"Let's be clear – this is not about 500 jobs as suggested by Mr Abbott. This must be about creating thousands of high skilled jobs both directly and indirectly through the support and growth of a vital industry – not just in Adelaide, but in Melbourne, Newcastle, Perth and Hobart," said Mr Bastian.

The union has expressed some concerns about the promised build.

"The truth is we've been burnt before. We were promised the submarines 2 years and that promise has been shown hollow," said AMWU Assistant National Secretary Glenn Thompson.

"So we'll wait for a bit more action and detail before we do any celebrating. Workers and industry need certainty as jobs are already going."

The Government's announcement focused on South Australia's ASC yard, but no mention was made of the shipbuilding yards in the Hunter Valley or Williamstown, where workers are anxiously awaiting their futures.

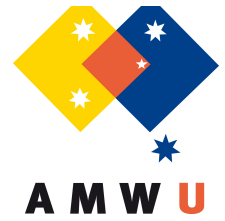
"There are ways that the Government could make this announcement even better, and this is by taking action to sure up jobs at every shipbuilding yard – not just in the state where the Government is worried about the polls," said Mr Thompson.

"Indeed, workers who have been made redundant in recent weeks will be with us in Canberra to explain the situation directly to Members of Parliament."

Shipbuilders are available for interview.

Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union

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