**ABBOTT GOVERNMENT FAILING TO SUPPORT YOUNG AUSTRALIAN WORKERS AND THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY.**

**Tuesday 8 September 2015**

Tony Abbott’s failure to support young Australians seeking a career through apprenticeship training poses a real risk to the future prosperity of the Australian economy.

Since coming to office the Liberal-National Coalition has withdrawn over a billion dollars in support for apprentices, a move which has effectively robbed thousands of young people of the trade training essential to securing good, well paying jobs.

The Australian Manufacturing Workers’ Union (AMWU) is concerned that unless the Abbott Government reverses the current trend, the catastrophic damage caused by the failure to properly support and promote apprenticeships will wreak havoc on the future capability of the Australian economy.

“The Coalition has turned its back on the automotive industry and has allowed the shipbuilding industry to languish through a lack of orders and now it’s placing the future of Australian manufacturing at risk by presiding over a collapse in apprenticeship numbers,” said Andrew Dettmer, AMWU National President.

“What Australia desperately needs is real leadership and a government that recognises the importance of building capacity for the future, increasing the skills level in the workforce and giving hope to young job seekers,” Mr Dettmer said.

Mr Dettmer said the fact that the numbers of workers starting or completing apprenticeships had fallen dramatically, and cancellations and withdrawals had increased, was a major concern.

“There is only one reason for this crisis: Tony Abbott and his Training Minister Simon Birmingham are bereft of ideas when it comes to growing the Australian economy.”

“The removal of key support mechanisms such as cash grants offered under the previous government’s ‘Tools for your Trade’ program mean those lucky enough to start an apprenticeship are facing significant debts because key financial supports have been torn down.”

Mr Dettmer said a highly skilled workforce was critical to Australia’s future economic and social well-being and apprenticeships were critical to developing these skills.

“This is yet another example of Tony Abbott’s failure to support Australian industry and jobs as he hitches his wagon to the China Free Trade Agreement that will prove to be a job killer for our workers and young people.”

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