

Thursday, 23 May 2013

Urgent crisis talks needed to save manufacturing jobs following Ford announcement

The ACTU has called for urgent talks between Governments, car manufacturers and unions to plan for the future of the industry and ensure we maintain skills and preserve Australia's ability to produce world-class cars.

ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said he had written to the Prime Minister, CEOs at Ford, Holden and Toyota, Victorian Premier Denis Naphthine, car component representatives and unions to meet for urgent discussions.

"This announcement by Ford that it will close operations from 2016 is a shattering blow for workers and their families," Mr Oliver said.

"These discussions need to address what the knock-on effects of Ford's announcement are. This includes the impact on jobs throughout the supply chain and what can be done to consolidate, diversify and improve access to global markets for Australian car manufacturers.

"Car manufacturers are struggling with the high dollar and trade barriers imposed by other countries. We need to ensure that our car industry remains viable so it can be part of the diverse economy we will need after the mining boom.

"The car industry provides 200,000 direct and indirect jobs, and supports hundreds of smaller manufacturing businesses. The 1,200 job losses at Ford could turn into up to 10,000 across the industry.

"We are calling on Federal and State governments, as well as Toyota and Holden, to sit down with unions and discuss a plan that addresses the issues and what we can do to ensure the future of the car industry in Australia.

"We need bipartisan backing to support jobs in Australia."

Mr Oliver condemned Ford for giving up on Australia.

"Governments and unions have been working hard to sustain manufacturing in Australia and Ford has walked away from this. They have devastated thousands of families, and the Geelong community," Mr Oliver said.

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