

Tuesday, August 13, 2013

Auto workers vote to back industry, time for Coalition to get on board

Holden workers have voted to back the industry they love - it's now time for the Coalition to end the uncertainty over the auto industry's future by committing to the co-investment it needs, the ACTU said today.

ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said Holden workers had taken a tough decision to back the future of Australian car manufacturing and congratulated unions and workers for negotiating a deal to pave the way for the next generation of Holden cars to be built in Australia.

"There's no doubt unions and workers have done the hard yards over the past month, after Holden demanded ten per cent pay cuts or it would shut up shop," said Mr Oliver.

"While it's been tough, the deal they've come to finds savings without cutting pay and does allow for pay rises if volumes turn around; and its contingent on General Motors committing to major new investment in Australia.

"This is an impressive outcome against a set of uniquely tough circumstances facing the auto industry."

Now that workers have committed themselves to the future for Holden, all other stakeholders must do the same, said Mr Oliver.

"Wages make up only 17 per cent of the cost of making cars, and factors such as the high Australian dollar and unfair trade practices by competitors have a far greater impact on the competitiveness of Holden.

"The State Government has stepped up, the Federal Government has shown its commitment to co-investment with the auto industry but, as Holden management has pointed out, there is great uncertainty around the future of the industry depending on the outcome of the federal election.

"The Coalition has said it will cut \$500 million in support out of the auto industry. This is a far, far greater threat to the future of the industry than any factor relating to labour expenses.

"We are calling on all players to step up to secure the future of car manufacturing in Australia."

Media contact: Ben Ruse 0409 510 879 or Eleni Hale 0418 793 885