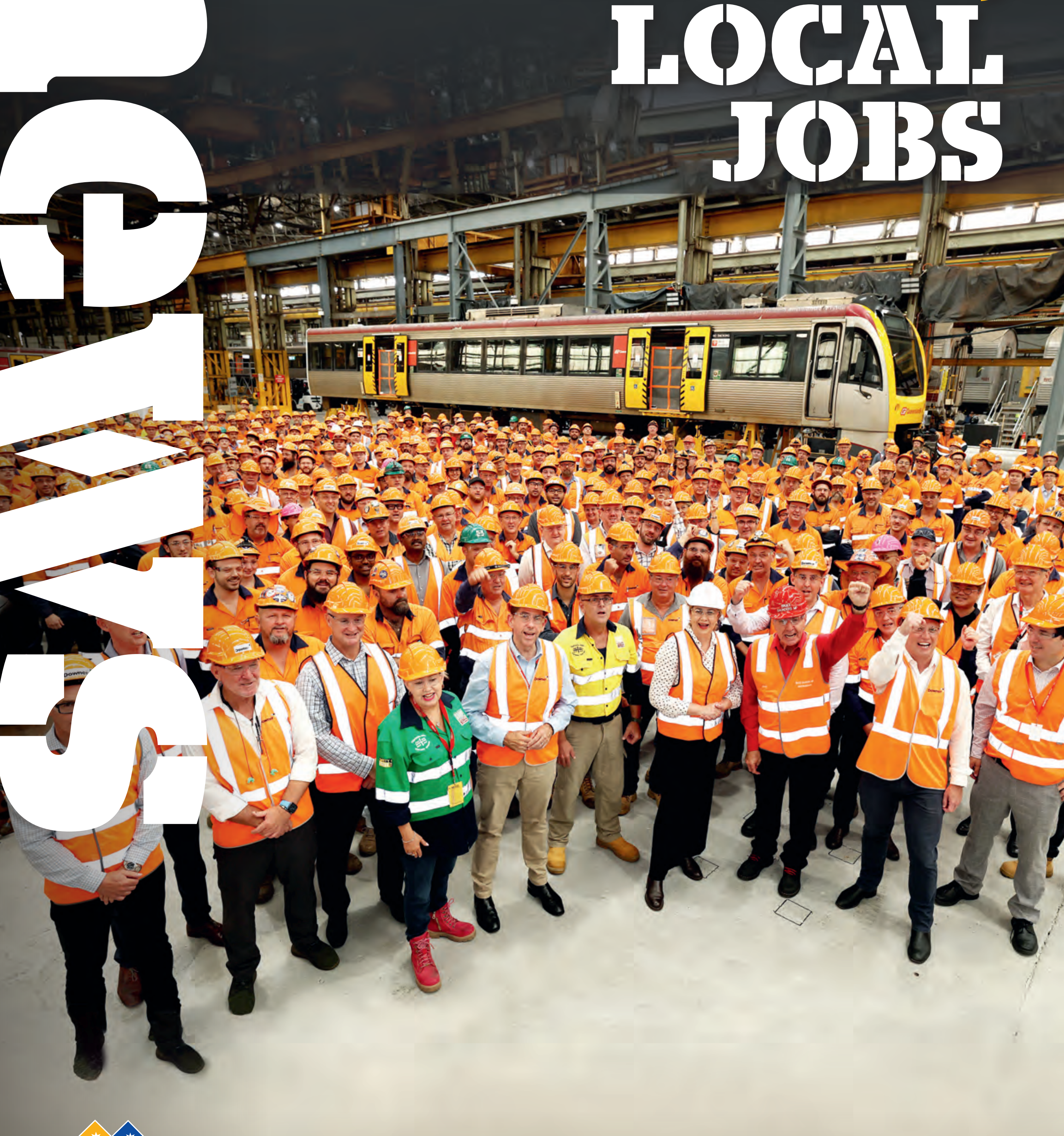
AUTUMN
2023

AMWU NEWS

LOCAL BUILDS, LOCAL JOBS



Rail sector skills under threat

Building offshore wind farms

Protecting local shipbuilding

AMWU

You work hard for your money – and that includes your super. So, you want to ensure you get the best returns to build your best retirement outcome – even if retirement feels like a long way down the track.

So where should you invest your super? Do you choose an industry fund or a retail fund?

Industry fund vs. retail fund

Both industry and retail funds are run for their members' best financial interests in retirement. However, retail super fund providers have a responsibility to shareholders, while industry funds don't pay dividends or profits to shareholders.

Choosing the right super fund should be made with a long-term view. After all, if you start work at 18, you could be contributing to your super for over 40 years.

Industry super funds

Industry super funds are profit-for-member organisations. This means profits are for the benefit of members, not shareholders. They were originally started by trade unions and employer associations, as a joint enterprise to ensure Australians had money set aside for retirement.

As 'profit for member' organisations, industry super funds have historically delivered higher returns to members, seen in the table opposite.

AustralianSuper is an industry super fund and Australia's largest super fund, with over 2.88 million members[1]. The Fund uses its size and scale to take advantage of opportunities that aren't available to smaller funds.

Retail super funds

Retail super funds are run by financial institutions, such as banks, and wealth management companies.

With retail funds, they can outsource key day-to-day functions to companies within its group.

These services include administration and investment management, and these sections of the fund are allowed to make a profit that goes to the parent company's shareholders.

AustralianSuper Balanced option net benefit

	Over 5 years	Over 10 years	Over 15 years
AustralianSuper Balanced option	$23,636	$91,376	$128,125
All super funds (average)	$17,978	$71,778	$99,002
Retail super funds (average)	$15,315	$61,846	$72,807

Net benefit refers to investment earnings to 30 June 2022 (less administration and investment fees. Comparisons modelled by SuperRatings, commissioned by AustralianSuper. The outcome shows the average difference in 'net benefit', a measure of past investment earnings after administration fees, investment fees and contribution taxes have been taken out. The results compare the AustralianSuper Balanced investment option and comparable balanced options, for historical periods to 30 June 2022. Insurance premiums and other fees and costs may also apply. Outcomes vary between individual funds. See Assumptions **australiansuper.com/campaigns/accumulation-net-benefit-model-assumptions** for more details. Investment returns are not guaranteed. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future returns.

In the table above, you can see that the Balanced option saves up to $55,318 more super (over 15 years), compared to the average retail super fund.

Make sure you do your research when choosing between an industry fund and retail fund. Your decision can make a big difference to your future.

It's Australian. It's super. And it's yours.

1. As at 30 June 2022.

Editorial

Union-won laws allowing multi-employer bargaining are already getting results.

One of the big changes to our bargaining laws that will take effect from June this year is the reintroduction of multi-employer bargaining. These laws will allow workers who share a 'common interest' to bargain together with more than one employer.

After nearly three decades of enterprise bargaining at the heart of our industrial relations system, this is an enormous opportunity for us to rebuild our union's structures and workers' power to lift wages, conditions and standards across our industries.

It's been a long time since unions and businesses sat down to negotiate constructively on industry agreements that benefit everyone. Enterprise bargaining pitted workers and businesses against each other in a vicious race to the bottom. In trying to undercut each other to win work, businesses cut workers' wages and conditions and cut corners on safety, training and qualifications. That made the quality of the work worse, compromised our ability to do our work safely and affected the reputations of entire industries.

It also created an environment where a worker's pay was more likely to be determined by which workplace they were in rather than by their skills, qualifications or experience.

People on all sides now recognise that this situation can't be allowed to continue. Establishing industry, geographical or trades rates and standards just makes sense.

Since the laws were first announced, we've been talking with employers in the heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) manufacturing industry. In November, the HVAC Manufacturing and Installation Association (HVACMIA) announced their support for multi-employer bargaining, and that they would work with AMWU members to establish consistent wages, conditions and training qualifications across the sector.

These employers have seen how enterprise bargaining has undercut workers' job security and their businesses' viability alike. An explosion of HVAC installation and maintenance contracts by companies with underpaid, poorly trained workers - with some forced to have an ABN to get a start - has hollowed out the ability for companies doing the right thing to win work and compromised safety on large construction and infrastructure projects.

We're now negotiating with HVACMIA to formally establish one of the first multi-employer agreements across fifteen businesses in NSW and the ACT that are supplying HVAC products and services to tier-one construction projects like hospitals, shopping centres, CBD buildings and airports.

That agreement won't just lift and standardise wages, conditions, recognition of qualifications and safety standards in the HVAC sector. It will establish an important precedent as we push for stronger and more consistent standards for workers in future multi-employer agreements across the industry.

This new era of multi-employer bargaining is still in its infancy. Everyone it affects is still feeling their way forward - business as well as workers. The first few agreements will set the tone for what follows. And a multi-employer agreement that locks in low wages and poor conditions across an industry is no use to anyone.

That's why we're already looking beyond the HVAC sector to see where else we can start working towards strong multi-employer agreements that put workers front and centre, including in rail, automotive, food and paper manufacturing. Clauses that lock in same work same pay, increase workers' bargaining power and protect workers' right to organise will be non-negotiable conditions of these multi-employer agreements.

If we can harness the potential that multi-employer bargaining offers us, we can improve the working lives of thousands of people - not workplace by workplace but across entire industries. It's an amazing opportunity that we'll be doing everything we can to seize.

Let us know where you'd like to see multi-employer bargaining next by getting in touch at **amwu@amwu.org.au**.

In Unity,

Steve Murphy
AMWU National Secretary

Contents

AMWU News is produced by the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union.

The AMWU acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet and work. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present. This land always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

NO SPIN

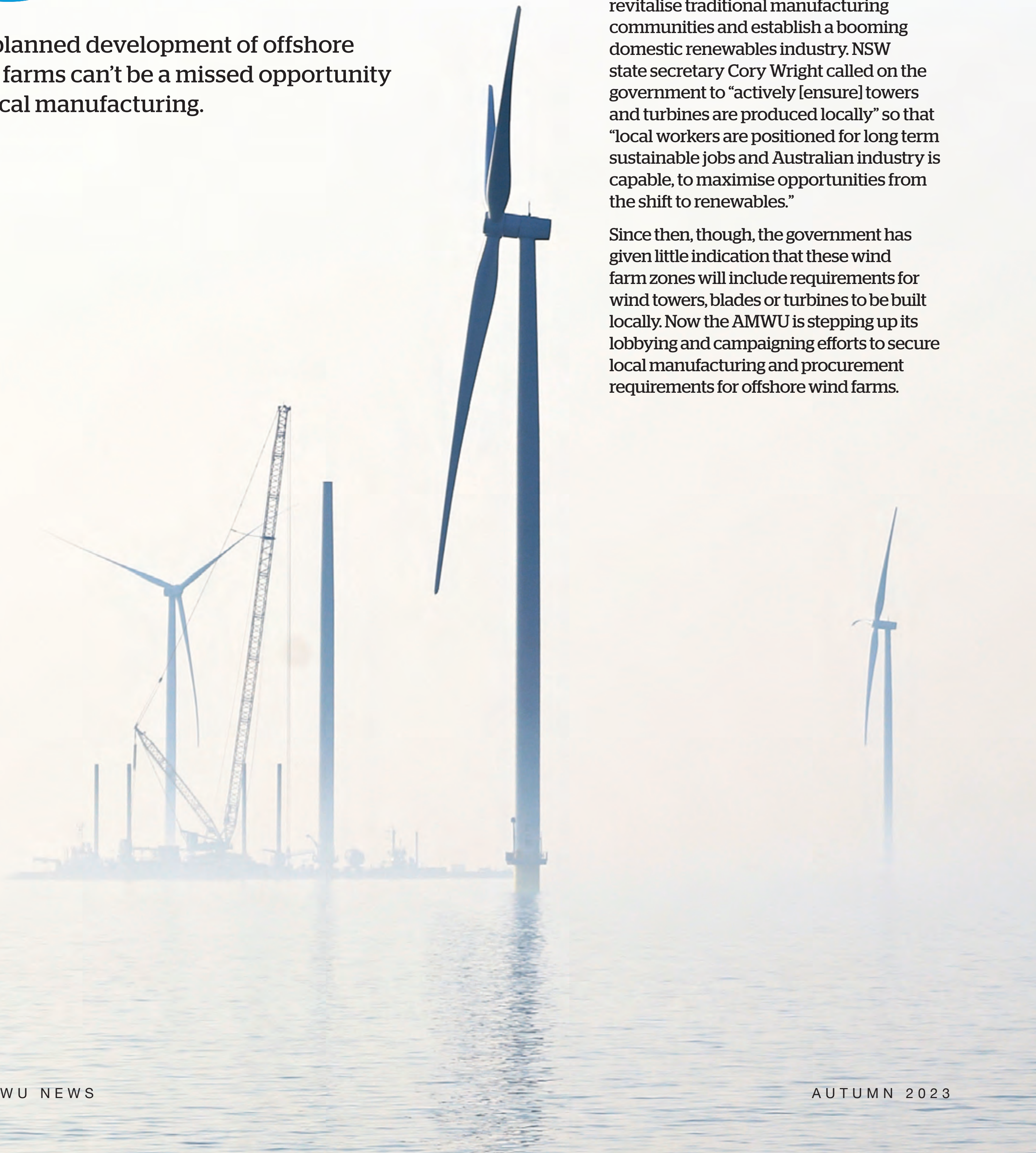
The planned development of offshore wind farms can't be a missed opportunity for local manufacturing.

In August 2022, Climate Change Minister Chris Bowen announced that the federal government intended to start approving zones for the development of offshore wind farms for the first time.

Bowen identified the Hunter and Illawarra regions in New South Wales, Portland and Gippsland in Victoria, and Perth and Bunbury in Western Australia as the likely sites of the first offshore wind farm zones. In December, three areas in Bass Strait off the coast of Gippsland were chosen as the site of Australia's first offshore wind farm – the Star of the South.

At the time, the AMWU welcomed the announcement as an opportunity to revitalise traditional manufacturing communities and establish a booming domestic renewables industry. NSW state secretary Cory Wright called on the government to "actively [ensure] towers and turbines are produced locally" so that "local workers are positioned for long term sustainable jobs and Australian industry is capable, to maximise opportunities from the shift to renewables."

Since then, though, the government has given little indication that these wind farm zones will include requirements for wind towers, blades or turbines to be built locally. Now the AMWU is stepping up its lobbying and campaigning efforts to secure local manufacturing and procurement requirements for offshore wind farms.



Offshore wind, not offshore jobs

In February, the union urged the government to help small-to-medium local manufacturing firms grow by putting requirements on businesses accessing funding from the $15 billion National Reconstruction Fund (NRF). Funding from the NRF could be used to help manufacturing workers in Gippsland, the Hunter, Bunbury and all over the country get the resources and training they need to build Australian wind farms.

“The NRF should require all funded projects to include minimum local content requirements and reporting” and “must explicitly include the creation of secure, well-paid jobs as a primary objective,” the union wrote in our submission to the government's NRF consultation process.

“As a prerequisite for tendering, companies must have in place standards to ensure that employment is direct and secure, jobs have fair wages, safe working conditions, support for collective bargaining and ready access to unionisation, and commitments to workforce development, training, and apprenticeships – especially for women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers.”

The problem with dumping

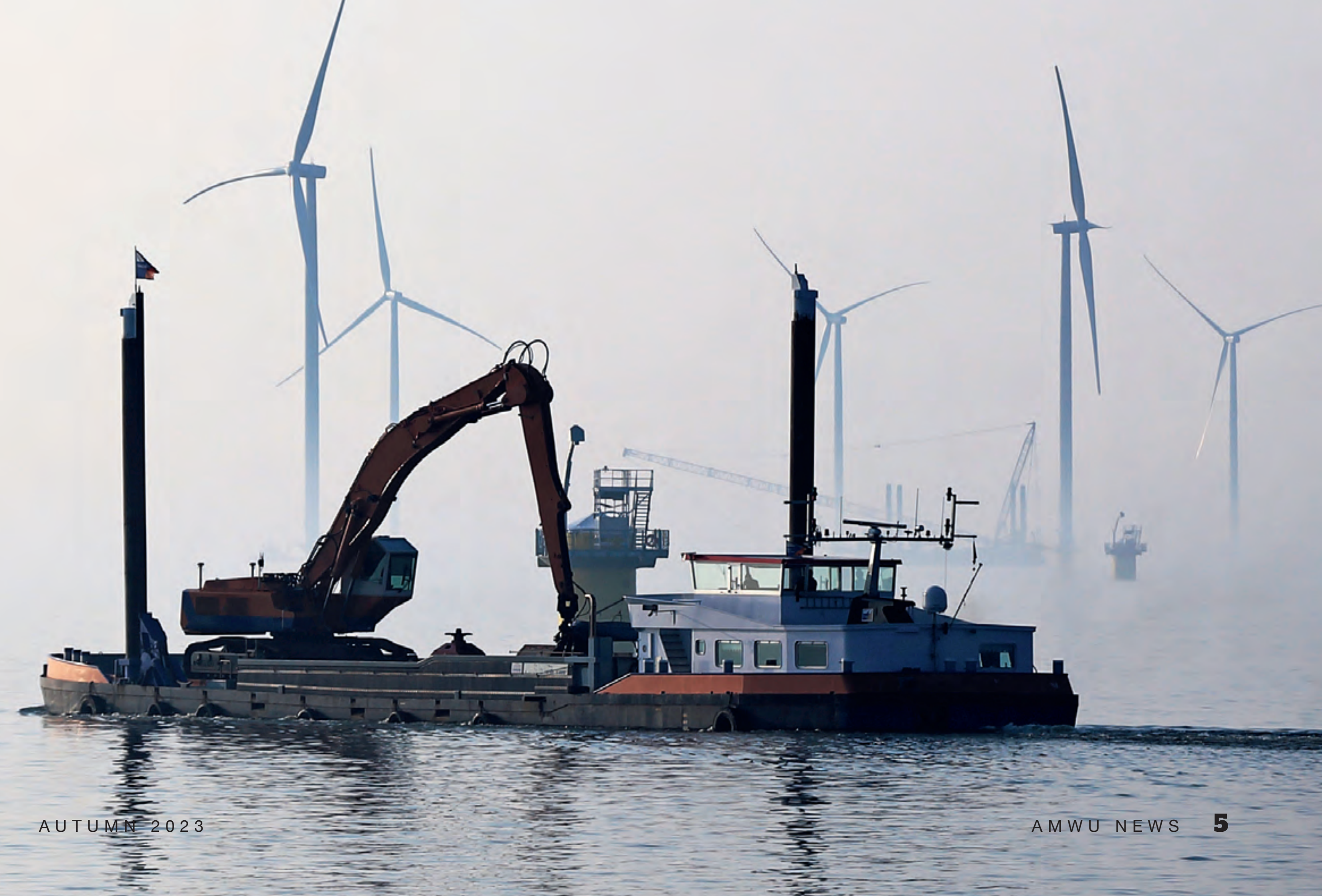
Australia is already encountering major problems with onshore wind turbines built overseas. In 2021, AMWU members discovered cracks in 19 of 40 wind turbines built for the Stockyard Hill wind farm west of Ballarat. The turbines were built and supplied by Xinjiang Goldwind Science & Technology Co, the world's biggest wind turbine manufacturer, and needed extensive repairs to meet Australian quality and safety standards.

Part of the problem is that Australia's current laws allow overseas companies to “dump” cheap and poorly made wind turbines on the domestic market at below fair market value. In July, the Anti-Dumping Commission allowed Chinese company Chengxi Shipyard Co to export wind turbines to Australia. Regulators in the United States and the European Union have imposed anti-dumping duties on Chengxi Shipyard-made turbines, which are made with poor-quality steel and significant subsidies from the Chinese government.

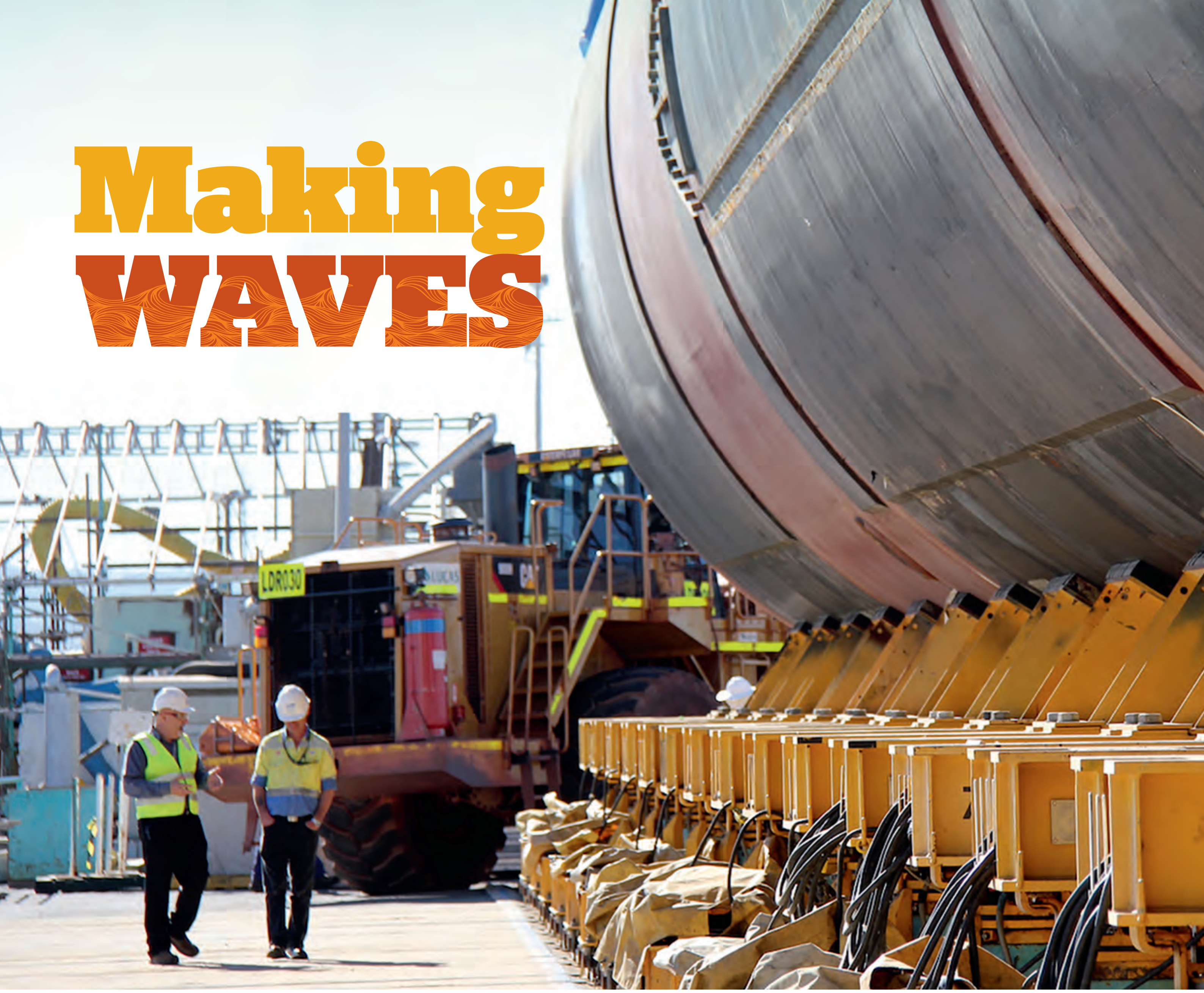
Victorian state secretary Tony Mavromatis responded by urging Industry Minister Ed Husic to “fix [this] long-overdue problem in our anti-dumping laws that undermines Australian manufacturing ... and close this loophole that threatens Australian workers and jobs.”

Australia is already encountering major problems with onshore wind turbines built overseas.

If the government does not mandate local manufacturing requirements for wind farms and use NRF funding to help local workers build them, Australia risks being flooded with cheap and shoddy turbines that will cost millions to repair and undermine any attempt to establish a viable domestic renewable manufacturing industry. This would be an unforgivable missed opportunity to create thousands of good jobs and begin rebuilding the manufacturing communities devastated by decades of offshoring, privatisation and government neglect. •



Making WAVES



Our campaign to secure local submarine manufacturing jobs is heating up.

Workers at Osborne and Henderson shipyards are still hurting from Scott Morrison's bizarre decision in 2019 to pull out of a $90 billion deal for French contractor Naval Group to supply Australia with 12 diesel-electric submarines.

The federal government had to pay Naval Group $835 million in compensation for backing out of the deal, which cost taxpayers about $3.4 billion in total. Around 6,000 direct and indirect local jobs that would have been created by the project went up in smoke.

The Australian Shipbuilding Federation of Unions (ASFU) – comprised of the AMWU, AWU, ETU, CEPU South Australia and Professionals Australia – has been campaigning furiously to give local shipbuilders job security and peace of mind. The main goal of this campaigning has been to secure a federal government commitment to ensure a steady supply of work for shipbuilders at ASC shipyards in Adelaide and Perth.

While the AUKUS nuclear submarines will eventually provide substantial work for local shipbuilders, more short-term build commitments are needed to build a base workforce of 5000 that can maintain the AUKUS subs when they come online in the late 2040s and give shipbuilding workers some much-needed stability after years of boom-and-bust work cycles.

"Timelines don't float"

With a new government in Canberra, the ASFU's campaign effort has gone into overdrive this year. While Defence Minister Richard Marles has previously said that the Albanese Government has "no plans for any conventionally powered interim submarine capability," he has also admitted that developing our domestic submarine manufacturing capacity "is the only way [AUKUS] can work". The ASFU saw an opportunity to hold the Albanese Government to its election promise to develop Australia's manufacturing capability so we can "make cars, trains and ships".

AMWU assistant national secretary Glenn Thompson, South Australian state secretary Peter Bauer and other ASFU representatives travelled to Canberra in February to meet with Marles and Defence Industry Minister Pat Conroy, explaining why shipbuilding workers, our manufacturing skills base and our

national security needs demand a confirmed pipeline of local builds and maintenance work. That lobbying effort received heavy media coverage, with several major newspapers covering the issue.

"At the moment, the AUKUS submarines are slated to be delivered sometime in the 2040s. But timelines don't float," Thompson says. "We need to kickstart the decades-long task of growing a domestic workforce capable of maintaining our AUKUS subs when they arrive."

"Despite decades of neglect, shipbuilding workers in Osborne, Henderson and Australia's great shipyards are ready and willing. With the right training, career pathways and skills development, we can have a shipbuilding workforce that's the envy of the world – and that shares its experience and knowledge across our entire manufacturing sector."

The campaign has also taken to the streets. South Australian shipbuilders rallied at Victoria Square (Tarntanyangga) in Adelaide at the end of February, calling on the federal government to commit to the interim build and provide certainty for hundreds of shipbuilders and their families.

Avoiding the "valley of death"

The ASFU campaign has received significant support from industry groups, former Royal Australian Navy (RAN) personnel and the South Australian government. South Australian Premier Peter Malinauskas has been vocal about the need for a large-scale submarine build in Adelaide for years and has been pushing hard for the Collins Mark II.

Last year, a group of senior RAN veteran submariners with more than 500 years of collective service published a paper warning that local builds are "necessary for sustaining today's submarine capability and preparing industry and Navy for nuclear submarines."

The Australian Industry and Defence Network (AIDN), which represents small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) working in the defence and security sectors, has also backed our campaign to keep local shipbuilders in work. AIDN chief executive Brent Clark told media outlets in February that "without the opportunity for an Australian workforce to exercise their skills on submarine construction the risk associated with building the next generation nuclear submarine becomes enormous".

Building our defence future

In March, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced that the AUKUS submarines will be based on the UK-designed Astute-class submarine, which has not yet been finalised. However, the AUKUS subs will be assembled in Adelaide and incorporate American technology.

While the promise of jobs in the 2040s is better than nothing, it only underscores the need to start building up our local shipbuilding workforce now. Any decision to buy interim submarines off-the-shelf from overseas would undercut local manufacturing and waste an opportunity to give local workers the skills they will need when the AUKUS subs need assembling.

The AUKUS announcement has done little to give shipbuilding workers in Adelaide and Perth peace of mind. Without a clear plan to build and maintain local shipbuilding jobs and knowledge, our local industry risks falling yet again into the "valley of death" that sees jobs disappear between builds.

While the Albanese government has been willing to listen to our concerns, we will keep pushing for concrete commitments that provide shipbuilding workers with jobs, training and opportunities to skill up.

Regardless of when or how the AUKUS submarines are eventually built, Australia is going to need a workforce of thousands of trained, skilled shipbuilders to maintain and repair our submarines for decades to come. Building that workforce will be a massive task – one that the AMWU will use to promote local shipbuilding workers at every opportunity. •

Above: ASFU representatives were in Canberra in February urging the need for consistent local builds.

Opposite: Workers at Osborne and Henderson shipyards are ready and willing to build future generations of Australian subs.

A seat at the table

The new National Reconstruction Fund is a chance to build workers' power.

The Albanese government's proposed National Reconstruction Fund (NRF) is promising to invest $15 billion in rebuilding local industry and supporting traditional manufacturing communities. But it's also an opportunity to give workers greater power in their workplaces and industries.

In February, national secretary Steve Murphy spoke before the Senate committee that's looking at how to improve the government's NRF bill. Murphy urged the government to include union and industry representation on the NRF board so that workers' voices are heard and acted on in the NRF's investment decisions.

Workers are on investment boards in many European countries with sophisticated manufacturing sectors, ensuring that unions, industry and businesses work together to increase productivity, protect union jobs and ensure workplace safety. Locally, union representation on the boards of industry superannuation funds has made industry funds more profitable and successful than commercial funds.

"It's a little bit offensive when we hear rhetoric that unions shouldn't be on boards and that workers' voices don't matter," Murphy said. "Workers know more about their industry, they know more about their jobs, and they know more about how to improve productivity and safety than a lot of people who sit on the boards right now."

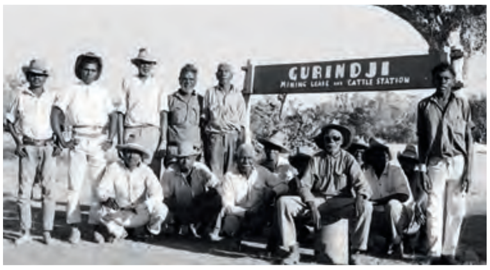
Murphy also recommended that funds from the NRF should only go to businesses with enterprise agreements in place. This would give companies that treat their workers fairly a competitive advantage against companies looking to undercut and exploit workers for the sake of profit.

"If the NRF is going to be the cornerstone of rebuilding a strong and resilient manufacturing industry in Australia, it's got to ensure that investment delivers secure, well-paid union jobs for workers and that funding is directed to value-adding industries that can rebuild our resilient supply chains but also diversify our regional economics as we transition away from fossil fuels," Murphy told the committee.

"The NRF has a critical role to play in ensuring that, particularly around renewable energy, a lot of the investment be prioritised for the manufacturing of these technologies in areas where these skills are readily available and exist, to support those workers through appropriate training to pick up the skills that they need so that they can get a good, secure, well-paid job should their current job end." •

Unions for Yes

Trade Unions have a proud history of standing in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their struggle for respect, recognition and justice.



In 2023, Australia will vote on whether to amend our Constitution to recognise and enshrine a Voice to Parliament.

Through the Voice, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are asking for recognition and to have a say on issues and policies that impact their lives.

Our Indigenous members have told us how the Voice to Parliament would help their families and communities. Backing them in on this important issue means so much to them and makes sense.

One of the most important values of our movement is "no worker left behind". This change is important and will make Australia fairer and better. We know that politicians, big business and sections of the media will want to use this to divide working people. Supporting the Voice to Parliament will not take away from the work we do every day to protect members' rights at work, fight for better wages and conditions, and address the cost-of-living crisis.

Our union is proud to lend our support to the Yes campaign. Over the years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and unionists have stood together time and time again against exploitation, persecution and threats to our rights. The Gurindji Wave Hill walk-off in 1966, which started the modern land rights movement, is one of the most famous strikes in Australian history.

The Australian union movement stood shoulder to shoulder with the Gurindji people, raising money for the workers and their families, transporting supplies, and publicising the cause. It was our union, known at the time as the Amalgamated Engineering Union, that submitted the applications to the then-Department of Interior for the return of land to the Gurindji people.

After more than 65,000 years of continuous culture, it's time Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are recognised in our 122-year-old Constitution. •

Above: Some of the original members of the Gurindji Wave Hill strike, with a sign painted by unionist Frank Hardy. The photograph was taken by Brian Manning, a trade unionist who supported the Gurindji strikers by bringing in truckloads of food to Daguragu.

Don't give an inch

Changes to the design rules that govern vehicle width are threatening to wipe out local heavy vehicle manufacturing.

Australia has a thriving heavy vehicle manufacturing industry. We make trucks, trailers and buses for private freight companies, local and state governments, and other public and private services. The industry employs approximately 5,000 people directly and contributes to at least another 15,000 jobs in supply chains.

AMWU members in the industry will be familiar with ADRs, the regulations that determine features like a vehicle's length, its height, the weight of its axle and how wide it can be.

In Australia, heavy vehicles can't be wider than 2.5 m, unless the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator grants an exemption. Exemptions are typical for specialist vehicles like emergency services vehicles and mining vehicles that don't typically travel on public roads.

Our ADR regulations are like those of Japan, where heavy vehicle width is also limited to 2.5 m. But there's no globally accepted standard – vehicle width regulations differ all over the world. In the United States and Europe, vehicles can be 2.55 m wide, and even 2.6 m if the vehicle carries a refrigerated load.

Global vehicle manufacturers like Kenworth, Volvo and Scania manufacture vehicles in Australia for the Australian market. The costs of redesigning a heavy vehicle and retooling factories and machinery for products in the Australian market is between $15-30 million. But this is a drop in the ocean compared to the $5 billion per year the industry is worth to the Australian economy.

Australian Design Rules (ADR) have been good for helping Australian bus, truck and trailer industries grow and create good, skilled jobs for thousands of local workers.

But some industry associations view the ADRs as placing a limit on their profits.

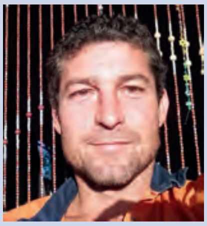
A Morrison-era hangover

In 2021, then-Transport Minister Barnaby Joyce hatched a plan to make it easier for the Coalition's industry association donors to import vehicles without needing to meet the ADRs. Joyce's Department of Transport was commissioned to produce a consultation paper called *Safer Freight Vehicles* which gathered the views of heavy vehicle industry associations, trucking companies and other players in the transport sector.

Despite the industry's valuable economic contribution, the consultation paper proposed just four options for making our heavy vehicle industries in Australia 'safer', and each one related to removing local width restrictions and allowing a flood of imported heavy vehicles.

Bad for safety, bad for jobs

The current Transport Minister Catherine King is now considering the department's recommendations. The AMWU has met with the Department of Transport to seek further detail on their proposals and their bureaucrats have said their priority is 'safety'.



But Michael West, an AMWU delegate who builds buses at Brisbane Bus Build, knows "it's the design of the vehicle that makes it safe, not its width. Making heavy vehicles wider won't keep drivers or other road users safe. It's the length that the ADRs should be focusing on because safety is about how long you allow a vehicle to be."

The ADRs create a barrier to overseas imports that doesn't cost taxpayers anything to maintain. Michael remembers that when previous governments removed taxes on heavy vehicle imports, "the market was flooded with cheap buses from overseas."

An inch makes all the difference

AMWU members in heavy vehicle manufacturing produce high-quality work that provides communities with public transport and a large share of the fleets of vehicles that connect our supply chains. It's important that we make sure this industry doesn't just wither on the vine because of processes that the Coalition government set in motion to benefit the billionaires that run the freight industry.

For the sake of an inch, the Albanese government could be willing to trade off thousands of skilled jobs and billions of dollars of economic value without any plan in place to drive the heavy vehicle industry's transformation. The production of electric vehicles, and whole new occupation profiles that recognise the skills of vehicle builders, will be essential to renewable industries.

The workers that build buses, trucks and trailers have been left out of the conversation around ADR changes, but it is these and other manufacturing workers who will be crucial to maintaining our heavy vehicle manufacturing industry. We can't give the industry associations an inch.

Inset: Michael West, an automotive electrician and AMWU activist, is one of around fifty workers at Brisbane Bus Build.

Below: AMWU members manufacturing Volvo and Mack Trucks in Wacol, Queensland, have been right behind the Support Aussie Made campaign that helped change the government at last year's federal election.

Save Our Skills

Rail engineering workers are under threat from an industry push to undercut their skills and training.

Proper skills and training in the rail manufacturing sector has a huge influence on the wider industry. Its engineers, boilermakers, welders, sheet metal workers and fitters need skills that apply across a wide range of professions and sectors. Trade workers in the rail sector take their skills and knowledge with them to other jobs and can use their broadly recognised and portable skills to bargain for better wages, conditions and working rights from a position of strength.

That's why rail employers and industry groups are trying to undermine rail workers' skills by pushing for new qualifications that would tie workers to the rail industry, prevent them from skilling up, and leave them at the mercy of companies bent on "micro-credentialling" their workforces into job insecurity.

Weakening skills, weakening conditions

Instead of teaching workers generic skills that they can use throughout their working lives in a variety of industries, industry groups like Australian Industry Standards and the National Transport Commission are lobbying behind the scenes to introduce certifications that teach task-specific skills without any prospect of further learning or career progression. New certifications like the Cert II in Rolling Stock Maintenance also sit outside the Manufacturing Award, which gives workers strong protections on wages, conditions and union participation in EBAs.

"It's diminishing the trades. They're saying that a 12-month qualification is equal to the four years you put in to get a Cert III," says AMWU Victoria organiser Nathan Tuddenham. "They're pretending like it's some magical cert where you come out afterward and you can do sparkie work, fitter work, everything - after one year of training. That's a massive attack on our skills."

Undercutting by stealth

Micro-credentialling is an old employer tactic that uses the skills and training classification system to undermine wages and conditions. By breaking down good, comprehensive certifications into much smaller teaching units, companies can train workers to do their jobs with the bare minimum of knowledge - and without having to pay them for their skills. It also makes workers reluctant to push for wage rises and good conditions - if workers only receive enough training to do one kind of work for a specific employer, the boss can use the threat of layoffs to keep them in line.

A lot of the new certifications also sit under the Rail Award, which has much weaker industrial protections. If the Rail Award becomes the industry standard, rail manufacturing workers all over the country will lose bargaining power.

Undercutting manufacturing workers in the rail sector will undercut wages and conditions across the entire industry. It will lead to fewer workers with the skills other kinds of work require, meaning more local manufacturing will be offshored as companies struggle to fill vacancies. When employers pass the buck on skills and training, it comes back to bite them as well as their workers.

"They're trying to say it's a way to fix the skills shortage, but it doesn't make sense," Tuddenham says.

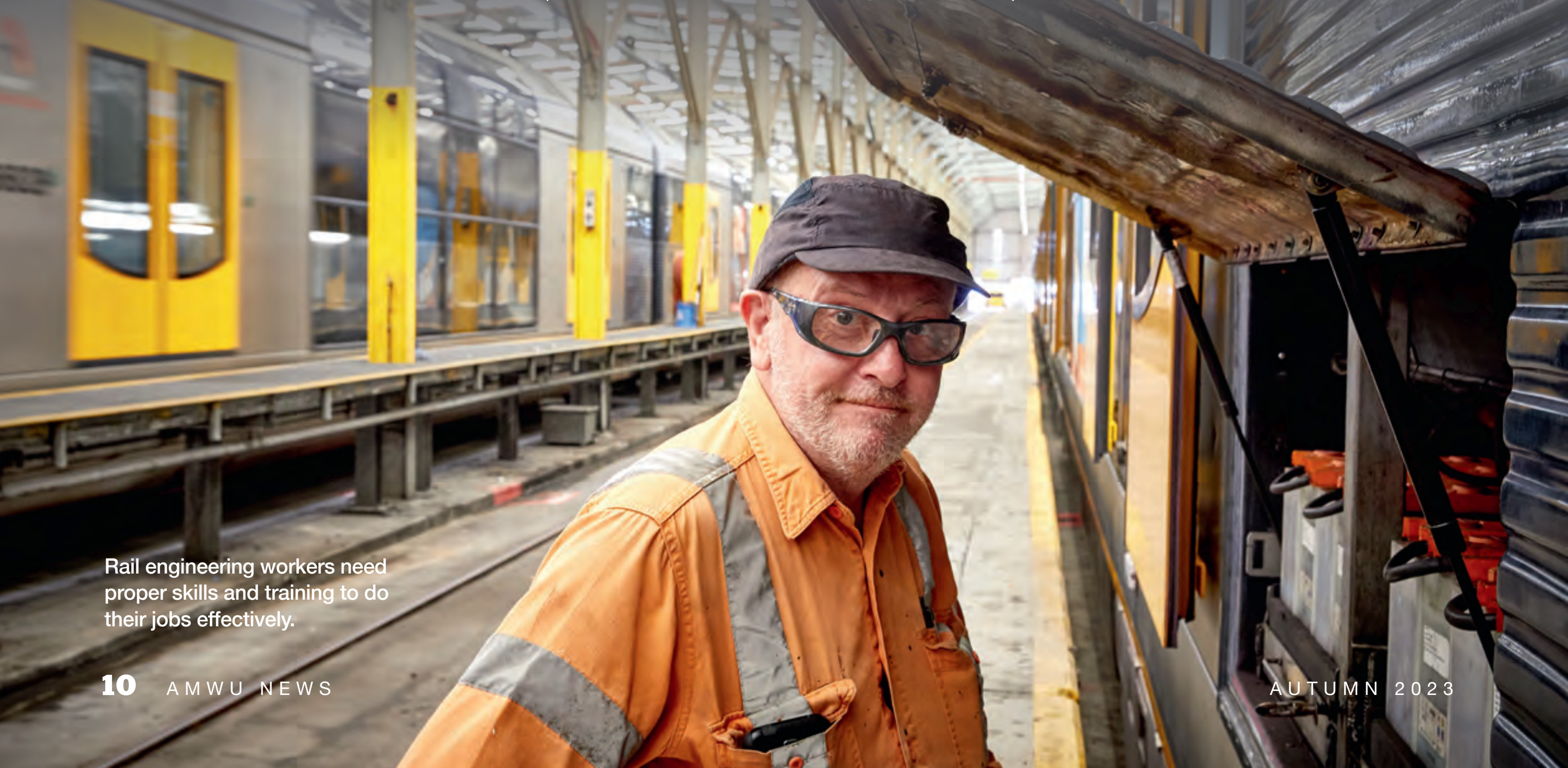
"Why don't these places train up their current staff instead of diminishing workers' skills?"

Strengthening our awards

AMWU organisers are working with comrades at the Electrical Trades Union and other unions to spread awareness on rail sites about the new certifications and warn workers off them.

"This potential recommendation, if rolled out through the industry, will decimate both the apprenticeship system and traditional trades whilst undermining employment security, at the same time risking the safety of the consumer," rail delegates from both unions resolved at a joint industry delegates meeting in December. They also resolved to insert the manufacturing industry awards and classifications as non-negotiable conditions of future EBAs.

That work is already getting results. The new EBA at Downer EDI Rail in Pakenham East includes clauses ensuring that workers classified from C6 to C10 under the Award need Cert III trade qualifications. •



Rail engineering workers need proper skills and training to do their jobs effectively.

DELEGATE PROFILE:

Peter Killeen

Peter Killeen is a fitter and turner at Downer EDI in Maryborough in Queensland.

Peter and his workmates have secured the region's rail manufacturing for years to come.

Peter's family have been building trains at Downer for decades. "We've done our time there - more than 100 years of service all up. My dad, my grandad, my brother, two nephews," he says. "My old man was a fitter and turner. My brother is too - it's flowed on through all of us."

Peter has been in the union ever since he started at Downer as an apprentice 14 years ago. He doesn't remember exactly when he became a delegate, but safe to say it's been a long time. "It's born and bred in the family," he says. "They'd kick my arse if I wasn't in the union. We're all pretty passionate about Maryborough and making sure the jobs stay here."

Members at Downer have had to fight for eight years to keep jobs in town. In 2015, Canadian train manufacturer Bombardier Transport closed its Maryborough facility after nearly 40 years. It saw 19 workers lose their jobs, and there were fears Downer would be next. That would be devastating in a town like Maryborough.

Instead of placing orders for new Queensland Rail builds with local manufacturers, the Newman Liberal government ordered $4.4 billion of trains from India. When they arrived, they were so riddled with design and safety flaws the government sent them to Maryborough for repairs.

"That was eight years ago, and we're only halfway through fixing them now," Peter says. "They were nowhere near up to standard."

Since then, members at Downer have lobbied the state government nonstop to make sure all future Queensland Rail builds are kept in the state.

"It took us a lot of work - we went on a lot of trips to Parliament House in Brisbane," Peter says. "The local member was really good."

Bruce Saunders, the state Labor MP for Maryborough, was on site at Downer in February when the Palaszczuk government announced Queensland Rail's next 65 trains would be built in Maryborough. Saunders singled out Peter as "an integral part of Downer being chosen to supply the next generation of Queensland trains.""Peter has always fought hard, supported and backed Downer to retain jobs in Maryborough," Saunders said on Facebook.

The announcement has had a massive impact in Maryborough.

"The whole town's pumping now. It's been huge not just for Downer but for the whole community," Peter says. "There's a feeling of security that wasn't there before."

With the jobs secured, Peter is taking a well-earned break - he's booked an eight-day cruise of the Pacific.

"Really looking forward to that," he says. "The phone's off!" •

Left from top:

When workers at Downer walked off the job in 2018 to protect their personal leave entitlements, they took the opportunity to head down to their local Bunnings to donate $5,000 towards farmers drought relief.

A pub chat with Anthony Albanese in 2021 included a plan to create more manufacturing jobs and apprenticeships.

Years of hard work by AMWU members paid off when the Queensland Government announced 65 new trains to be built in Maryborough, supporting local 800 jobs.

AMWU members like Peter were critical in bringing the NGR trains purchased offshore by the previous LNP government to Maryborough for rectification.

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Callout for National Conference agenda items

In accordance with Rule 5A3 of the AMWU Rules, the National Secretary advises that the 2023 AMWU National Conference will be held from 29-31 August and calls on District Committees, State Industry Committees, Work Shops, State Councils, State Conferences, and National Industry Committees to forward items for the National Conference Agenda Paper.

The closing date to submit agenda items is Tuesday, 18 July.
Please send agenda items to **ns@amwu.org.au.**

Authorised by Steve Murphy,
AMWU National Secretary, 2023.

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AMWU

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