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Abbott must come clean on impact of Japanese trade deal on submarine plan

The Abbott Government must come clean on whether or not a deal has been done with Japan to purchase 'off the shelf' submarines at the expense of Australian jobs and industry.

ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver called on Prime Minister Abbott to be upfront about the exact contents of the trade deal struck with Japan and any implications it will have on local shipbuilding.

"We're dealing with a Government that doesn't care about protecting or creating Australian jobs," Mr Oliver said.

"It is not only in our national security interest for our defence fleets to be designed, built and maintained in Australia but having this local capability is critical in the promotion of local jobs, skills and investment.

"We also need to build subs and ships locally to maintain our maritime engineering capability.

"Every other Government in the world recognises the value of investing in local industries to support local economies and to create jobs.

"Unfortunately for Australians the Abbott Government's policies and priorities are all pursued at the expense of Australian workers.

"For the Defence Minister to casually dismiss concerns by stating that Defence is not a 'job creation agency' demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of the critical benefits of local shipbuilding.

"It is widely accepted that domestically produced defence fleets are an essential component of a modern, technology-based defence force.

"Before Mr Abbott left for Japan he said he wanted to enhance defence cooperation with Japan, well we need to know exactly what that means.

"Does enhanced cooperation mean selling out Australian national security, jobs and industry for beef exports?"

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