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## A “Buy Australian Act” will create jobs

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) is calling for all Australian political parties to support a Buy Australian Act that would require all major government projects and services to use locally manufactured goods, such as steel, iron, clothing and equipment.

The Buy Australian Act would generate a trifecta of benefits: jobs for Australian workers, a badly needed boost to the Australian economy and would ensure government projects use safe, Australian made goods.

This would ensure jobs are created and maintained locally. It is vital that our manufacturing industry thrives and create much needed development and service jobs, rather than being killed off like Ford this past week.

A similar ‘Buy American’ provision was used by the US Government in 2009 to stimulate the American economy after the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and continues to operate within the United States government purchasing guidelines. At the height of the GFC the US unemployment rate was 9.7% now it is lower than Australia’s, with youth unemployment in the double digits in some Australian regions.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver:

“We are sick and tired of seeing our jobs being exported overseas, we are sick and tired of seeing cheap, unsafe products being imported into the country and we are sick and tired of seeing exploited, cheap labour being used over local workers.”

“Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull needs to stand up for working people in Australia by creating local opportunities for both workers and businesses – a Buy Australian Act would do this.”

“Prime Minister Turnbull has promised to create jobs but his poorly negotiated Free Trade Agreements don’t even sell off jobs, working conditions and sovereignty, they literally give it all away.”

“Basing buying decisions just on accounting principles alone does not factor in the extra value created by ensuring that we have local, stable, well paid jobs. When people have those jobs they drive demand and growth which in turn provides the revenue all Australian governments need for our national health, education and infrastructure.”

“The cheapest price today doesn’t always mean value for money in the long run. If it is made by exploited workers overseas or robs Australian people of jobs and business opportunity how much does that discount really cost?”

“This is not about limiting trade, this about making sure Australian governments are investing tax payer dollars locally on every major project.”

“The Victorian Government recently showed how this policy could work when it awarded the contract to build 20 new trams to the Dandenong manufacturer Bombardier as part of a specific strategy to boost the local manufacturing economy.”

“In contrast, we have seen the contract to manufacture the Australian Defence Force’s noncombat uniforms go to a discounting international competitor, we don’t make the paper used in

Australian passports anymore, forcing the closure of a paper mill in regional Victoria, and without union pressure the submarines being built in South Australia would have been made entirely overseas.”

“Australian lives have also been put at risk by the importation of dangerous building products containing asbestos and a range of other unsafe, substandard goods. Some of these unsafe materials have found their way into hospitals and other places where vulnerable people would be put at serious risk.”

“This Government needs to put the people of Australia first, rather than the interests of multinationals.”

“The Buy Australian Act will ensure Australian families have work, Australian businesses have opportunities to grow and will ensure our infrastructure and services meet the high standards that the Australian people expect and deserve.”

**ENDS**

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<http://www.actu.org.au/actu-media/media-releases>