

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Subject: 09:00 (AEST) MEETING WITH MICHAEL WRIGHT, NATIONAL SECRETARY; ADAM WOODAGE WA STATE SECRETARY; s 22(1)(a)(ii), WA LEGAL OFFICER & PILBARA DELEGATE; ETU RE BHP BARGAINING | CTC: DR KATIE HEPWORTH s 22(1)(a)(ii) | BN: MB26-000450 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Location: APH - M1.24 Meeting Room - 10 People - VC

Start: Wed 13/05/2026 8:30 AM

End: Wed 13/05/2026 9:00 AM

Recurrence: (none)

Meeting Status: Meeting organizer

Organizer: Minister Kinn

Required Attendees s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Resources: APH - M1.24 Meeting Room - 10 People - VC

Archived: Wednesday, 3 June 2026 11:24:04 AM

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Mail received time: Wed, 6 May 2026 02:37:46

Sent: Wed, 6 May 2026 02:25:04

To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Cc: [Katie Hepworth](#)

Subject: RE: Meeting request - BHP Pilbara Bargaining update with ETU delegate [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Importance: Normal

Sensitivity: None

OFFICIAL

CAUTION - This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Thank you very much s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Have a good afternoon.

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Sent: Wednesday, 6 May 2026 12:21 PM

To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Cc: Katie Hepworth s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Subject: RE: Meeting request - BHP Pilbara Bargaining update with ETU delegate [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Good morning s 22(1)(a)(ii)

I have confirmed 09:00 on Wednesday 13 May in the Minister's diary.

Minister King's office is located on the House of Representatives side of the Ministerial Wing, suite M1-24.

Please let us know if you need any assistance getting to the office.

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Executive Assistant to the Minister / Office Manager

Office of the Hon Madeleine King MP

Minister for Resources

Minister for Northern Australia

CANBERRA : +61 s 22(1)(a)(ii)

M : + s 22(1)(a)(ii)

OFFICIAL

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, 6 May 2026 09:49
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: Katie Hepworth s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: RE: Meeting request - BHP Pilbara Bargaining update with ETU delegate [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Further to Katie's email below, we would like to confirm that 9:00am on 13 May works well for the ETU.

We have scheduled our other meetings around this time, so it would be greatly appreciated if they could meet with Minister King then.

Please let us know if this is suitable.

Thanks
 s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Katie Hepworth s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Wednesday, 6 May 2026 9:30 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc:
Subject: Re: Meeting request - BHP Pilbara Bargaining update with ETU delegate [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks for coming back to me. I've cc'd s 22(1)(a)(ii) here. I just tried to call you but I think you are on WA time? s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 s 22(1)(a)(ii) - do you have any other availability through the day? s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 s 22(1)(a)(ii) f you'd like to give her a call.

FYI - The Liberty Bell Bay meeting is a joint union delegation, led by the We will have a member there as a delegate facing redundancy at the site. Our request here relates to BHP in WA, and the current status of industrial bargaining.

Kind regards,
 Katie

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: T
To: Katie Hepworth s 22(1)(a)(ii) Invitations King <Invitations.King@resources.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Meeting request - BHP Pilbara Bargaining update with ETU delegate [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Good afternoon Katie

Thank you for your email.

The Hon Madeleine King MP is happy to meet with Msrs Wright, Woodage and s 22(1)(a)(ii) in Canberra next week.

Minister King has a time slot of 09:00 on Wednesday 13 May 2026 available. I am sincerely hoping this works with the gentlemen's schedule as spaces are very tight in the Minister's diary due to it being Budget Week.

I also note the Minister is meeting with ETU delegates regarding Liberty Bell Bay on the same day.

Unfortunately s 22(1)(a)(ii) was not cc'd below so I apologise for not including her.

I look forward to hearing from you at your convenience.

Please note : By accepting this meeting time and date, you are aware that due to Sitting Week and Parliamentary Proceedings taking priority the Minister's diary may change with little notice and the Chief of Staff or an Adviser may need to take this meeting in lieu of the Minister. This is outside of the control of the Minister, and we will do our best to accommodate the meeting with the Minister where possible.

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Executive Assistant to the Minister / Office Manager

Office of the Hon Madeleine King MP

Minister for Resources

Minister for Northern Australia

CANBERRA : s 22(1)(a)(ii)

M : s 22(1)(a)(ii)



OFFICIAL

From: King, Madeleine (MP) s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 4 May 2026 16:12
To: Invitations King <invitations.king@industry.gov.au>
Subject: FW: Meeting request - BHP Pilbara Bargaining update with ETU delegate

CAUTION - This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

From: Katie Hepworth s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 4 May 2026 4:09 PM
To: King, Madeleine (MP) s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Meeting request - BHP Pilbara Bargaining update with ETU delegate

Dear Minister King,

I would like to request a meeting on behalf of Michael Wright (National Secretary, Electrical Trades Union), Adam Woodage (WA State Secretary, ETU), s 22(1)(a)(ii) and BHP Pilbara delegate.

They will be in Canberra on Wed 13th May.

The ETU is currently in bargaining at BHP operations in the Pilbara, across the three distinct areas of BHP operations in the region (port, railway and mine operations).

The meeting is to outline the current status of bargaining. The Minister will have the opportunity to hear from our

ETU delegate about current working conditions on the mine - including individual contracts that see workers some workers earning up to \$30,000 p.a. less for doing the same job, and the falling competitiveness of FIFO work in the Pilbara.

Please contact myself or s 22(1)(a)(ii) (cc'd) to set up a meeting.

Dr Katie Hepworth

National Policy Director

Electrical Trades Union

M. s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

www.etunational.asn.au



'The ETU acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.'

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DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESOURCES

MB26-000450

To: Minister for Resources

MEETING WITH ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION (ETU) AND BHP PILBARA DELEGATE

Timing: For meeting at 9:00am to 9:30am on Wednesday, 13 May 2026.

Meeting with: Representatives of the Electrical Trades Union (ETU) – National Secretary Michael Wright, WA State Secretary Adam Woodage, s 22(1)(a)(ii), and the ETU BHP Pilbara delegate (to be confirmed).

Prior meetings: Nil

Proposed note taker: Nil

What we want: To hear about the current working conditions for electricians across Pilbara mining operations.

What they want: Provide an update on the status of union bargaining with BHP and discuss general working conditions and the falling competitiveness of fly in-fly out work in the region.

Company Overview:

The ETU is a national trade union representing electrical workers across Australia. The ETU's national office is headquartered in Sydney, New South Wales.

Founded in 1919, the ETU is one of Australia's largest trade unions, representing more than 60,000 electrical workers nationally. It operates through state and territory branches and is a division of the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union (CEPU).

The ETU represents members employed by companies operating across multiple sectors, including mining, energy, manufacturing, construction and utilities, with members working at sites in Western Australia, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and the Northern Territory.

Issues and Sensitivities:

1. Recent reforms to the Fair Work Act have strengthened enterprise bargaining, union access and worker protections, and expanded the Fair Work Commission's role in facilitating bargaining.
 - a. The *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Act 2023* received Royal Assent on 14 December 2023.
 - b. These changes have lowered the barrier to collective agreements in sectors with limited union coverage, including remote mining operations such as the Pilbara.

Clearing Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)	A/g General Manager Mining and Remediation Branch	Ph: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Mob
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)	A/g Manager Metals Mining	Ph: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
For Parliamentary Services' use only. Date Submitted to the Minister's office in PDMS:			07/05/2026

- c. The Amendments allow employees, unions and host employers to apply to the Fair Work Commission for an order that labour hire employees must be paid at least what they would receive under a host business's enterprise agreement.
2. On 25 March 2026, ETU members across BHP's high-voltage network at its Pilbara operations endorsed a protected action ballot with 42 employees eligible to participate in protected industrial action¹.
 - a. According to statements made by the ETU the ballot covers specialist electrical workers employed under individual contracts who are seeking negotiation of a baseline enterprise agreement.
 - b. The workers are seeking objective career paths and measurable progression, transparent pay adjustments to replace discretionary increases and formal recognition of travel time and time spent on call.
3. On 9 April 2026, media outlets reported that the ETU officially notified BHP that work bans would commence the following week.
 - a. The workers said that their pay varies by more than 30 per cent for the same work, and conditions are subject to the discretion of managers.
4. On 16 April 2026, ETU members began protected industrial action, including a ban on overtime, a ban on call outs, and a ban on mentoring new employees.
 - a. The union withdrew notification of a ban on acting as supervisors following BHP advising that it wouldn't accept partial performance of duties in relation to that ban.
 - b. This marks the first industrial action at a Pilbara mine operator in nearly 30 years.
 - c. Public reporting indicates the protected industrial action is ongoing.
5. Media reports indicate a sharp increase in union right-of-entry activity at BHP sites year-on-year.
 - a. In 2025 BHP received 844 right of entry requests, and 168 in 2026 (as of March 10), an average of 2.4 a day. This is up from a total of 358 in 2023 as unions work to increase their presence in the iron ore sector².
 - b. The Minerals Council of Australia Chief Executive Officer, s 22(1)(a)(ii) PSM, has reportedly stated that "the law is clearly being abused and is not operating as it should".³

Electrical Trades Union part of The Safeguard Mechanism?	No
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¹ <https://www.nationaltribune.com.au/pilbara-industrial-action-the-result-of-hubris/>

² <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/business/mining-energy/union-boss-says-bhp-thought-strikes-were-history-but-they-were-wrong/news-story/0f50410d51a1ec13511da4baf19b3e15?btr=43aac73735e548a9f2b42ff7d6b6aa7d>

³ <https://www.ntnews.com.au/business/bhp-on-strike-action-countdown-as-unions-push-towards-1400-rightofentry-requests-a-year/news-story/ce5265fef1e3c27066fbfe492f166fb8?btr=e04d5dd10c6c83222085158a4c962e7d>

<i>As reported by the Clean Energy Regulator in to 2022-23 reporting year.</i>	NA
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Consultation with the Partnerships and Projects Division, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts: NIL

6. Other Consultation: NIL

Attachments:

- A:** Background
- B:** Biographies
- C:** Talking points

Background

Comments attributed to Michael Wright, ETU National Secretary

Mr Wright has commented on other industrial relations matters in the past related to the energy transition. On 12 March 2025, Mining.com.au¹ reported Mr Wright to have said:

- Australia's energy transition will fail unless it is built on reliable, well-paid union jobs that put workers' safety, communities and families first."
- "It is a warning that nobody wants an energy transition that compromises safety, that exploits workers, that locks out workers' representatives and that breaks the law and disregards workers' basic rights."
- "Any company that thinks it can cut corners on safety, cut wages through labour hire and cut unionised labour out of energy transition should read it very carefully and reconsider their position."

Comments attributed to Adam Woodage, ETU WA State Secretary

On 25 March 2026, regarding voting for protected industrial action for electrical workers on BHP's high-voltage network in the Pilbara, The National Tribune² reports Mr Woodage to have said:

- "Today's vote is the result of hubris by BHP."
- "Their disagreement with the people who keep the lights on and the ore moving has reached this point because of a protracted, deliberate and short-sighted refusal on the part of the company to negotiate a reasonable, consistent agreement."
- "For years they have been working under wildly disparate individual contracts, with basic conditions at the whim of individual managers, who have played favourites and built personal empires through the selective application of company policies."
- "Workers put a position to BHP more than 12 months ago hoping to commence negotiation of a fair, reasonable, transparent agreement. The company has refused to negotiate on a single point."
- "This refusal left workers with no other way forward than to pursue protected industrial action."
- "It's nobody's preferred way forwards, but when it is the only way forward it is one that we are more than prepared to take."

On 9 April 2026, Mr Woodage made further comments relating to the industrial action:³

- "If BHP comes to the table in good faith, there will be no need to escalate this any further."

¹ <https://mining.com.au/union-court-win-against-energyconnect-contractor/>

² <https://www.nationaltribune.com.au/pilbara-industrial-action-the-result-of-hubris/>

³ <https://thenightly.com.au/business/electrical-trades-union-to-take-protected-industrial-action-at-bhps-wa-iron-ore-mines-on-april-16-c-22117696>

- Mr Woodage warned the BHP strikes will be “one of the first of many to occur in the Pilbara”.
- “We’re over 6800 members, and that is in all industries — from lifts to mines to oil and gas construction,”.

Attachment B

Biographies

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Michael Wright

National Secretary, Electrical Trades Union

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Adam Woodage

WA State Secretary, Electrical Trades Union

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Talking points

- The Australian Government is committed to fairness and prosperity in Australia's workplace relations system, so it can sustain employee wellbeing, wages growth and high productivity.
- The Government's *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Act 2023* reforms modernise the bargaining system, deliver better productivity and closed loopholes that allowed pay and conditions to be undercut.

Closing the labour hire loophole

- The Government has closed the loophole that allowed wages to be undercut using labour hire arrangements, ensuring that labour hire workers are paid at least what they would receive under a host employer's enterprise agreement.
- Labour hire should not be used to undercut bargained wages and conditions. A race to the bottom on wages and conditions benefits no one.
- These reforms are delivering higher wages and better job security for labour hire workers.
 - About half of the same job, same pay orders have been in the mining industry.

- Some orders are reportedly delivering pay increases of up to \$60,000 a year.
- In some cases applications for orders have led to employers agreeing to directly employ labour hire workers.

Casual employment

- The Government's reforms have closed the loophole that leaves people stuck as casual employees when they are working like permanent employees but don't get any of the benefits of job security.
- The amendments make the definition of a casual employee fairer, so the practical reality of the employment relationship is relevant, not just the contractual description.
- The changes also mean there is one single, clear pathway to change from casual to permanent employment in the minimum employment standards.
- Our changes to the law give workers more choice about how they work and earn. No one will be forced to convert from casual to permanent employment if they don't want to. Employers can refuse conversion where there are fair and reasonable operational grounds to do so.

s 22(1)(a)(ii) /ETU meeting notes

Wednesday, 13 May 2026

9:00 AM

MEETING WITH MICHAEL WRIGHT, NATIONAL SECRETARY; ADAM WOODAGE, WA STATE SECRETARY

Union representative provided an update on bargaining

- Negotiations with BHP were not progressing quickly enough from the union's perspective.
- Noted BHP has enterprise agreements covering many of its workers across multiple states and involving several unions.
- Stated there was no clear justification to treat Pilbara workers differently.
- Unions considering all options including further industrial action.
- Requested the Government clearly communicate to BHP that :
 - unions have a legitimate role in representing workers and
 - Unions should be able to advocating for fair pay and conditions in the Pilbara.

Government representatives

- Acknowledged the unions concerns and reaffirmed that unions have a legitimate role in representing workers, particularly in the Pilbara mining industry, which involved demanding, remote and potentially hazardous work.
- Encouraged the union officials to engage constructively with BHP to reach fair outcomes
- Emphasised the expectation of good-faith bargaining in line with Australia's industrial relations framework.
- Encouraged unions to brief other relevant Government ministries on the status of negotiations.
- Requested to be kept informed of progress in the bargaining process.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Subject: 10:00 (AEST) MEETING WITH DELEGATION FROM s 22(1)(a)(ii) & ETU RE LIBERTY BELL BAY | CTC: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | BN: MB26-000448
[SEC=OFFICIAL]

Location: APH - M1.24 Meeting Room - 10 People - VC

Start: Wed 13/05/2026 9:30 AM

End: Wed 13/05/2026 10:00 AM

Recurrence: (none)

Meeting Status: Meeting organizer

Organizer: Minister King

Required Attendees DLO King; s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Resources: APH - M1.24 Meeting Room - 10 People - VC



4 May 2026

Hon Madeleine King MP
Minister for Resources
Minister for Northern Australia
Member for Brand
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Via email: Invitations.King@resources.gov.au
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Dear Minister King,

We write on behalf of s 22(1)(a)(ii)
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

the Electrical Trades Union. Our unions represent over 200 workers at the Liberty Bell Bay manganese smelter. We also have a strong and longstanding presence in the smelter's supply chains and in the surrounding communities of the Tamar River and Northern Tasmania.

We are grateful to the Commonwealth and Tasmanian governments, who extended a \$3 million lifeline to cover wages during Liberty Bell Bay's ongoing administration. This prevented the retrenchment of the Liberty Bell Bay workforce, maintained the prospects of a sale as a going concern, and significantly boosted morale on site and in the George Town community. It also provided the impetus for ASIC to withdraw a parallel wind down application - removing one significant pressure point on workers and site operations.

However, as you may be aware, this \$3 million lifeline is intended as an emergency stopgap to prevent the imminent retrenchment of the workforce. These funds can only go so far, and as it stands will only fund workers' wages until 19 May - by which point administrators will be forced to initiate redundancies under Australian law.

The undersigned unions call on both governments not to allow this to eventuate, and to commit to supporting the Liberty Bell Bay workforce until a sale to a reputable buyer can be finalised.

There are many important reasons why the Commonwealth must seek to play such a role, rather than risking the smelter's slide into liquidation. Indeed, the challenge of ensuring a future for the smelter should pale against the multitude of good reasons for its continued existence:

1. The facility is a lynchpin local employer. Despite its challenges, Liberty Bell Bay continues to provide hundreds of largely high-quality, well-paid jobs. It does so in a region and state where average earnings trend well below the national average, and unemployment trends higher. The history of Australian industry tells us that once a capacity is lost, it is invariably lost forever, with local workers and economies foremost in bearing the brunt.
2. The site's economic fundamentals appear stronger than its current predicament implies. While dumping of Indian-produced manganese products has disrupted prices and markets, and must be addressed, Bell Bay's production costs are competitive by global standards. Interest in its purchase by up to ten prospective buyers suggests real potential for a viable future - though only if workers and capital remain in place.
3. Closure of Australia's only manganese smelter would diminish our sovereign capability - and at a time of historic disruption to supply chains and the wider geopolitical order. Manganese is a key input to the production of steel, as well as many aluminium and other metal products. An Australia that could no longer produce the mineral would have gambled its ability to procure basic metal products on an ever more volatile external environment.
4. Liberty Bell Bay is a leading example of large-scale green industry. The facility already relies heavily on hydroelectricity, offering it a considerably simpler decarbonisation journey than most Australian smelters and heavy industry sites.

A failure to act will carry a cost to government – potentially a large one. This would likely accrue in the form of workers' termination entitlements and site decommissioning costs, passed to the taxpayer if and when a liquidated facility could not meet them.

We understand that, under current arrangements, the administrator has the capacity to fund workers' wages until 19 May. We therefore ask to meet with you to discuss the smelter's future at Parliament House, Canberra during the sitting week of 11 May. You will have the opportunity to hear directly from members at Liberty Bell Bay about their current situation.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

can arrange for a meeting on our behalf.

Workers, Tasmania and the country are better off if manganese production in Bell Bay continues. We look forward to exploring how we can protect this future with you.



Sincerely,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Michael Wright
**NATIONAL SECRETARY
THE ELECTRICAL TRADES
UNION**

Archived: Wednesday, 3 June 2026 11:26:26 AM

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) [Invitations King](#)

Subject: RE: Worker Delegation - Liberty Bell Bay Joint Union Caucus - Meeting Request 11-13 May

Importance: Normal

Sensitivity: None

Good morning s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks for taking my call earlier.

This is to confirm a meeting with the Hon Madeleine King MP at 10:00 on Wednesday 13 May 2026.

Please be aware the Minister's meeting room can only accommodate a maximum of 6 people in your delegation. Can you please provide the names of the attendees as soon as you can?

Also please note : By accepting this meeting time and date, you are aware that due to Sitting Week and Parliamentary Proceedings taking priority the Minister's diary may change with little notice and the Chief of Staff or an Adviser may need to take this meeting in lieu of the Minister. This is outside of the control of the Minister, and we will do our best to accommodate the meeting with the Minister where possible.

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Executive Assistant to the Minister / Office Manager

Office of the Hon Madeleine King MP

Minister for Resources

Minister for Northern Australia

CANBERRA : +s 22(1)(a)(ii)

M : +s 22(1)(a)(ii)



From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Sent: Tuesday, 5 May 2026 12:29

To: Invitations King <invitations.king@resources.gov.au>

Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Subject: Worker Delegation - Liberty Bell Bay Joint Union Caucus - Meeting Request 11-13 May

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Dear Minister King,

Please find attached correspondence from s 22(1)(a)(ii)

TU National

Secretary Michael Wright.

We are bringing s 22(1)(a)(ii) and ETU members to Canberra next week and would appreciate the opportunity for the Minister to meet with them to discuss Liberty Bell Bay.

Kind regards,

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DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND RESOURCES

MB26-000448

To: Minister for Resources**CC:** Minister for Industry and Innovation; Minister for Science**MEETING WITH DELEGATION FROM** s 22(1)(a)(ii)
BAY**ETU RE. LIBERTY BELL****Timing:** For meeting on Wednesday 13 May 2026 at 10:00 AM, Australian Parliament House M.1.24**Meeting with:** s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Michael Wright (ETU National Secretary), s 22(1)(a)(ii)

and s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Proposed note taker: Nil**What we want:** To hear from union leaders their members' concerns and to discuss support for Liberty Bell Bay workforce.**What they want:** Government commitment to extending the existing employee wage support at Liberty Bell Bay to avoid redundancies until a sale to a reputable buyer can be finalised.**Issues and Sensitivities:**

1. Unions and workers from Liberty Bell Bay are meeting with Commonwealth Ministers and Members of Parliament in the week commencing 11 May, calling on governments to provide longer-term certainty to workers and continued government support during the sale process to secure the future of the smelter (Attachment A).
2. The Commonwealth and the Tasmanian governments have provided \$3m to the administrators, EY, to fund wages whilst a sale process is undertaken. This funding will pay wages until 19 May.
3. Provision of the current \$3 million employee wage support is not a commitment by the Commonwealth to fund the administration until a sale is complete. Any further request for support will undergo robust analysis to ensure solutions are targeted, sustainable and valuable to Australia.
4. The Commonwealth and Tasmanian governments (governments) and administrators are continuing to explore pathways to maintain competitive tension and achieve a sale, with

Clearing Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)	General Manager Whyalla Steelworks Taskforce	Ph: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Mo
Contact Officer:	s 22(1)(a)(ii)	Manager Whyalla Steelworks Taskforce	Ph: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Mo
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governments open to extending employee wage support to retain the full workforce during an expedited sale process.

- a. Of note, as at 11 May, the Minister for Industry and Innovation was considering a recommendation to extend wage funding for a further two weeks, through to early June.
5. Notwithstanding the employee wage support from the governments (and the potential for further wage support), the administration and sale process cannot continue if the administrators are unable to secure other, non-wage, support which is now expected to be exhausted by 20 May (this may be unknown to worker representatives). If further funding cannot be secured from another source, there is a significant risk administrators will be required to commence liquidation proceedings, including seeking court order in the coming weeks.
6. In the event of job losses, the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) would lead the Government's response to support impacted workers, working closely with Services Australia, the Department of Social Services and Department of Health, Disability and Social Services, and the Tasmanian Government.
7. Manganese is on the Australian Critical Minerals List. However, Liberty Bell Bay produces midstream manganese alloys for use in steel production, mostly non-strategic, commercial grade steel, rather than for use in priority technologies. For this reason, Liberty Bell Bay has been managed as an industrial capability issue, rather than a critical mineral supply chain issue.
8. Union representatives met with the Treasurer on 8 April in relation to the administration of Liberty Bell Bay. No further insights from this meeting are available to the department.

Consultation with the Partnerships and Projects Division, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts: Nil, the matter is not relevant to the Northern Australia portfolio.

9. Other Consultation: Minerals and Resources Division. DEWR.

Attachments:

- A:** Media Article 260511 Liberty Bell Bay Workers Rally in Canberra for Job Security
- B:** Background
- C:** Biographies
- D:** Talking points

Liberty Bell Bay Workers Rally in Canberra for Job Security



HOTELS & STAYS

Thinking of travelling?

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Bell Bay Joint Unions

Workers from Liberty Bell Bay have travelled to Canberra today to meet with Federal Ministers and MPs, calling on governments to move beyond short-term stopgaps and deliver long-term certainty for the future of Australia's only manganese smelter.

Delegates representing workers at the Bell Bay site are meeting with key decision-makers as unions continue pressing for urgent support to secure wages, maintain operations, and protect hundreds of Tasmanian jobs while the sale process continues.

The visit follows the announcement by the Tasmanian and Federal Governments of a jointly funded \$3 million loan package to keep workers paid until 19 May in the immediate term.

While unions welcomed the intervention as an important first step, they warned the ongoing cycle of uncertainty cannot continue, with workers repeatedly left waiting until the last minute to learn whether support will continue.

Australian Workers' Union Assistant National Secretary Chris Donovan said workers had come to Canberra because the future of the smelter was too important to be handled one pay cycle at a time.

"Workers should not have to spend every day wondering whether their jobs will still exist by the next payday," Mr Donovan said.

"The \$3 million commitment was a welcome first step, but everyone understands it does not solve the broader problem."



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"These workers have travelled to Canberra to look Ministers and MPs in the eye and explain what is at stake, not just for Bell Bay workers and their families, but for Tasmania and Australia's sovereign industrial capability."

"Bell Bay is the only manganese smelter in the country. If we lose it, we lose critical industrial capacity that cannot simply be rebuilt overnight, if ever."

"The sale process will take time. Governments know that. Industry knows that. Workers know that. What workers are

asking for is certainty while that process plays out."

"Every time workers are forced into another last-minute scramble before payday, confidence in the future of the site erodes. That uncertainty risks the workforce, but ultimately losing these workers would also risk any sale."

Mining and Energy Union General President Grahame Kelly said the workforce had shown extraordinary resilience throughout the administration process.

"Workers at Bell Bay have kept turning up to work despite enormous uncertainty hanging over them and their families," Mr Kelly said.

"They deserve more than rolling crisis management. We need a clear pathway that protects the future of this facility and the jobs that depend on it."

AMWU National Secretary Steve Murphy said the Bell Bay workforce remained united in the fight to secure the future of the smelter and the industrial jobs it supports across northern Tasmania.

"Union members at Bell Bay have kept Australia's industrial heart beating." Mr Murphy said. "These workers keep our entire steel industry moving. We are standing with these families to make sure the gates stay open and these jobs stay in Tasmania."

ETU National Secretary Michael Wright said workers at the Liberty Bell Bay smelter cannot be left high and dry.

"It's disgraceful these workers are left wondering day in, day out if they have a job or not. They're doing the hard work in what should be Australia's future industry, but instead are left with total uncertainty." Mr Wright said

"Workers need assurance, security and to be safe in the knowledge that Liberty Bell will stay open."

The Liberty Bell Bay smelter directly employs hundreds of workers and supports thousands more jobs across Tasmania through contractors, supply chains, and regional economic activity.

Unions say continued government support during the sale process remains essential to ensuring the facility remains operational and attractive to potential buyers.



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Background

- On 22 April 2026, the Commonwealth and Tasmanian governments announced a joint commitment of \$3 million to fund employee costs at Liberty Bell Bay, while the administrators progress the sale process.
- On 23 March 2026, White Oak, a private equity company with 100 per cent security over LBB shares, appointed receivers over its security (the shares in LBB). The receivers terminated the GFG Alliance appointed Board and appointed new independent directors to LBB. These directors determined LBB was, or was likely to become insolvent and appointed Ernst & Young (EY) as administrators.
- White Oak's action followed the Tasmanian Government's action on 29 January 2026 to appoint a receiver to take control of the manganese ore supply of LBB, following continued breaches of the terms of its \$20 million bridging loan to the facility (announced 20 August 2025).
 - No Australian Government funding was provided to GFG Alliance or to Tasmania for this loan.
- On 6 March 2026 the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) applied to the Supreme Court of NSW to wind up LBB following the company's failure to lodge annual reports for four years in a row.
 - ASIC has discontinued this action with the company now in voluntary administration.
- On 19 November 2025, the Tasmanian Government announced the establishment of the Bell Bay Response Team (BBRT) to ensure the region remains strong and supported.
 - Jess Teesdale MP, Federal Member for Bass is a member of the BBRT.

Liberty Bell Bay operations

- On 19 May 2025, Liberty Bell Bay announced it was entering a period of limited operations from 16 June to 13 July 2025. Despite the arrival of manganese ore through the Tasmanian government's bridging loan, GFG Alliance did not resume production.
- When operating, Liberty Bell Bay is estimated to have around 250 direct employees and 100 contractors. The administrator, EY, reported a workforce of around 216 employees as of 31 March 2026.
- Liberty Bell Bay is the sole domestic producer of manganese alloy, which is used in steel products including for the defence, construction and mining sectors.
- The majority (around 70-75 per cent) of manganese alloy produced at LBB has in recent years been exported to the USA. Around 15-20 per cent has fed the domestic

steel market. Since Liberty Bell Bay became non-operational in May 2025, the domestic steel market has pivoted to imports.

- Liberty Bell Bay has faced significant operational challenges due to ore supply disruptions and depleted working capital.

Powering the Regions - Safeguard Transformation stream grant

- In 2024, LBB was awarded a \$766,612 Powering the Regions - Safeguard Transformation stream grant to trial substituting coke with biocarbon in the production of ferro manganese and silico manganese. DISR, in consultation with DCCEEW, suspended this grant.

Manganese as a critical mineral

- Manganese is on Australia's Critical Minerals List.
 - Manganese is primarily used as an alloying component of steel and is present in almost all types of steel.
 - There is also a small but growing use of manganese in the production of lithium manganese iron phosphate (LMFP) batteries. These batteries are a low-cost type of lithium battery with increasing popularity for use in electric vehicles.
 - Liberty Bell Bay does not directly support the supply chain of critical or priority technologies. The manganese alloys produced at Liberty Bell Bay largely contributes to the supply chain of non-strategic commercial-grade steel.
 - Batteries, including LMFP, are considered a critical and priority technology. However, Liberty Bell Bay does not contribute to the manganese battery supply chain.
- Consequently, the response to Liberty Bell Bay has been managed by the department as an industrial capability issue, rather than as a critical minerals issue.

DEWR-led support for workers should job losses be announced

- Retrenched workers and their eligible partners have immediate access to tailored employment services under the Early Access initiative and can directly register with a Workforce Australia provider for support.
- An on-the-ground transition support network assists retrenched workers to find a new job as soon as possible.
- DEWR is working closely with Skills Tasmania and the network of Apprentice Connect Australia Providers, to ensure that if a redundancy program is announced, apprentices could have their apprenticeships transitioned to alternative employers in the region.
 - There is a pipeline of major projects across Northern Tasmania over the coming decade. If redundancies are announced, Australian and Tasmanian

Government services will support affected workers to find new jobs and build skills.

Employer responsibilities

- Employers must comply with requirements under the Fair Work Act and any industrial instruments, including recent amendments to improve safety, job security and fairness.
- The Fair Entitlements Guarantee (FEG), administered by DEWR, provides financial assistance to eligible employees in cases of employer liquidation or bankruptcy, where they have not been paid their entitlements.
 - If the company enters liquidation, eligible terminated employees will be able to claim financial assistance for unpaid employee entitlements through FEG.
 - FEG is a scheme of last resort that funds outstanding employee entitlements where these cannot be obtained from other sources.

DEWR Job Coordinator for North and North-West Tasmania

- Job Coordinators are on the ground and can develop solutions for businesses and communities. They bring together businesses, employment and skills services and community organisations to connect people to training, jobs and support services.
- They can:
 - Connect individuals with programs, services, funding opportunities and resources in their local area.
 - Provide advice to help businesses get the most out of hiring practices to attract and retain the right staff.
 - Work with organisations to develop workforce initiatives and solutions.
 - Share information and insights about skills and workforce priorities.

Biographies

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

**Michael Wright,
National
Secretary, The
Electrical Trades
Union (ETU)**

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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Talking points

- I want to reiterate my concerns on the impact of current uncertainty on the Liberty Bell Bay workers and their families.
- The Commonwealth has made a joint \$3 million commitment with the Tasmanian government to fund wages of employees whilst a sale process is underway.
- The department is continuing to work closely with other Commonwealth departments, the Tasmanian Government and the administrators to support workers, secure the best possible outcome for the facility and the Bell Bay community.
- George Town is an important industrial community. Important to Tasmania and important to Australia. We want that to continue.
- Requests for taxpayer support must undergo robust analysis to ensure solutions are targeted, sustainable and valuable to Australia.
- The Commonwealth Government's preferred outcome here is for the administrators to secure a new buyer to provide for the continues operation of the facility.

- However, the Commonwealth Governments has comprehensive programs in place to assist workers facing job loss, and those affected by retrenchment events.
 - All retrenched workers and their partners have access to employment services support through Workforce Australia.
 - The Transition Support Network ensures employers and workers understand their rights and obligations during redundancy.