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Media Release

Manufacturing on the brink: Beef processing company warns “reform or more jobs will be lost”

The meat processing industry will follow the path of Australia’s motor vehicle manufacturers unless it undertakes major workplace reform, according to one of the nation’s largest beef processing companies.

Teys Australia chief executive officer Brad Teys said a number of companies that specialise in higher quality grain fed beef have been forced to close, merge or restructure over the past decade due to uncompetitive workplace arrangements.

The company’s Beenleigh plant, with over 800 staff, will be hit with a 24 hour strike by the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union on Friday, a move Mr Teys said highlights “how out of touch the union is”.

“We are dealing with a union that is stuck in the 70s, that still believes in unfettered union power,” he said.

“Times have changed and the manufacturing industry must change or it will die. The community knows that and most of the families of our 800 staff know that.”

Mr Teys described the reform needed as “more workplace flexibility and a more engaged workforce”.

“We see a workplace where the company and workers share the same goals and vision. A profitable company provides job security,” he explained.

He said most of Teys’ staff - many who are not union members - oppose the continued industrial action, with only 28 per cent of the total workforce voting in favour.

“We are concerned for those staff who will lose a day’s pay for the second successive week as a result of the union’s action.”

“The union’s control is disproportionate to the views of the workforce and these bully tactics show why reform is needed.”

Teys Australia is in the process of negotiating a new workplace agreement.

“The meat processing industry is vital for the Australian economy and we must ensure its long-term viability and protect thousands of jobs and associated industries across the country,” Mr Teys said.

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