



TOM VENNING MP

Member for Grey



MEDIA RELEASE

23 SEPTEMBER 2026

LABOR DELAYS WHYALLA STEELWORKS SALE BY UP TO 6 MONTHS

Federal Member for Grey Tom Venning MP has questioned the decision by State and Federal Labor governments to extend the timeline for the Whyalla Steelworks sale by up to six months, warning the delay risks driving skilled workers out of the community for good. The extension comes just a week after more than 800 job losses were confirmed at the steelworks.

"It has been a devastating few weeks for the Whyalla community, and State and Federal Labor have handed them another blow by extending the timeline for a deal by up to six months," Mr Venning said.

"Let's be clear: this delay is not the decision of the administrator. It sits solely with the State and Federal Labor governments.

"This is the last thing workers and the Whyalla community need right now."

Mr Venning said workforce issues are now a serious risk for Whyalla with skilled tradespeople and steelworkers considering leaving Whyalla before steel production is restarted through the new DRI and EAF plant from 2030 onwards.

"Workers cannot be expected to put their lives and livelihoods on hold while they wait for a decision, they need certainty," Mr Venning said.

"They will move on in search of secure work, and once that happens, those skills are gone from the community for good."

Mr Venning is also concerned that if skilled workers leave Whyalla, the community will face a critical skills shortage when the steelworks eventually restarts, leaving the industry reliant on a fly-in fly-out (FIFO) workforce and putting the long-term future of Whyalla at risk.

"In February last year, Premier Malinauskas's government placed the Whyalla Steelworks into administration. At the time, he told the Whyalla community a deal would be done by Christmas," Mr Venning said.

"He has now pushed that timeline past Christmas again this year.

"Since the steelworks was placed into administration, more than \$1 billion has already been made available by taxpayer money to keep the operation going. That is more than \$4 million for every steelwork's worker, while more than \$3 billion in public funding has been committed to the future of the steelworks.

"After that level of public investment, the Whyalla community deserves certainty, and taxpayers deserve to know when they can expect a return on this enormous public investment."

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