



MEDIA RELEASE

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Union demands crisis meeting with Barilaro and Berejiklian to save 182 Essential Energy jobs

NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Deputy Premier John Barilaro are being urged to hold a crisis meeting with power industry unions to find a way to save 182 regional jobs being slashed by publicly-owned electricity distributor Essential Energy.

The NSW Government-owned company, which operates the electricity poles and wires across 95 per cent of NSW, has given staff less than a week to respond to the planned cuts before the first workers are shown the door.

The United Services Union, which represents white-collar employees at Essential, said workers had been told this first tranche of job cuts would impact heavily on the company's Port Macquarie headquarters, along with regional depots including Bathurst, Lismore, Grafton, Taree, and Broken Hill.

USU general secretary Graeme Kelly OAM said it was not too late to find alternatives to save these regional jobs, but it would require the full support of the NSW Government.

"Essential Energy remains 100 per cent publicly owned, so the NSW Government has the power to force management to find alternative savings measures that don't require slashing jobs in regional communities," Mr Kelly said.

"We are urging Premier Berejiklian and Deputy Premier Barilaro to sit down with power unions, examine the proposal, and work with us to find a solution that can save these regional jobs.

"Ahead of the election, the National Party repeatedly promised the people of rural and regional NSW that they would not face public service job cuts. This is the first test of those promises.

"In the last four years, Essential Energy has been gutted, with almost half the workforce going as more than 2,000 jobs were slashed.

"In many regional communities, these job losses have had a substantial impact on the local economies, forcing local families to move away as they look for alternative work.

"There are alternatives to these latest cuts, there are options on the table that can deliver cost savings while protecting regional employment, but they require firm political action, not just words."

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