



MEDIA ALERT

Thursday 8 August 2019

Bulahdelah: Union meeting with Essential Energy workers to identify alternatives to job cuts

Electrical Trades Union officials are holding a series of meetings with Essential Energy workers on the Mid North Coast today to identify a range of cost savings that could avoid the need for forced job cuts.

ETU Secretary Justin Page is conducting the Essential Energy depot visits as part of a state-wide effort seeking feedback about localised solutions that could drive new revenue for the company, create greater efficiencies, and maintain employment numbers.

The NSW Government-owned company last month announced plans to immediately cut 182 jobs across the network, including dozens on the Mid North Coast. The community, which is home to Essential Energy's head office at Port Macquarie, is also likely to suffer the largest share of an additional 500 job cuts that the company plans to make during the coming years.

The union has already provided a series of proposals to the company that could avoid job losses, including:

- The insourcing of work currently contracted out — as other NSW electricity distributors have done — including pole replacements, service wire replacements, street lighting maintenance, vegetation management, yard maintenance, and information and communications technology (ICT) functions;
- Entry into the contestable metering market, given Essential Energy workers already possess the required skill sets; and
- Entry into the renewable energy market, given the significant amount of renewable projects being constructed across regional NSW.

Since 2012, the workforce at Essential Energy has nearly halved as more than 2,000 jobs have been lost, drastically reducing the number of skilled front-line workers available to respond to blackouts, storm damage, or other major incidents.

DOORSTOP: Union meeting with Essential Energy workers

When: 12.30pm, Thursday 8 August 2019

Where: outside Bulahdelah depot, Cnr Stuart St and Bulahdelah Way

Media comment: Justin Page — 0414 877 301

Further information: George Houssos 0418 655 682 or Tim Vollmer 0404 273 313

Essential Energy employees or their family members who require crisis support are urged to contact Lifeline (13 11 14 and lifeline.org.au) or beyondblue (1300 22 4636 and beyondblue.org.au).