



TAYLOR SAYS COWRA CANNERY CLOSURE A TRAGEDY FOR THE TOWN AND REGION

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Angus Taylor, the Liberal candidate for Hume said today that the announcement that the Cowra Windsor Foods cannery was in voluntary administration was a tragedy for the town and the region.

“We have few enough jobs in Cowra as it is. To lose the employment of seventy or so people is a serious blow to the town. It is devastating for the employees, suppliers and other creditors and their families, but also very, very disappointing for the whole community.

Mr Taylor said that while it was good news that Dick Smith was taking a strong interest in the issue, he didn't diagnose the problem in quite the same way. The Guardian reported last Friday that Mr Smith said that the reason for the closure was “extreme capitalism gone mad”.

Mr Taylor said:

“I put our troubles in food manufacturing down to a loss of competitiveness of Australia versus other countries.

“We have high costs relative to offshore producers. We have also had limited or no productivity gains in manufacturing in recent years. To make things worse, the high Australian dollar is getting more and more bloated as the Australian government borrows huge sums from offshore.”

Mr Taylor said that the increasing concentration of two big supermarkets was also having the effect of sending some agricultural producers to the wall.

“Closure is almost certainly because Australia is becoming less and less competitive in comparison to the rest of the world. Manufacturing businesses in Australia simply cannot be sustained.

“The coalition has a plan to address these problems. We will reduce government debt to take pressure of the dollar, get rid of the carbon tax and refocus every effort on increasing productivity. We are also committed to competition policy that limits the power of large retailers. I am delighted that my friend and former colleague, Rod

Sims (who now Chairs the ACCC, the competition regulator) is working hard on this issue.

“The coalition will not continue to borrow massive sums of money from offshore to feed a government spending addiction – an addiction that is in turn helping to ruin Australian manufacturing and hurt Australian agriculture.”

Mr Taylor said that while he was in no position to second guess what might happen to the cannery, or whether the prospects of it re-opening in another guise were positive. However, he said he was working closely with Alby Schultz and others to use his agriculture and business experience to help salvage the situation if that is possible:

“The best thing we can hope for is for a sale of the business or assets to a new operator who can see a way of making a profit.”

“I will spend time in Cowra in the coming weeks to see if there is anything I can do to help in any way salvage the current situation.”

“We are looking at some Government programmes that could help, and I am delighted to say that Ministers within the current Government are supporting these endeavours.

“Regardless of our views about the cause of this outcome, we need to work together to deliver the best possible outcome for the individuals impacted and the region.”

Mr Taylor said that there is a federal General Employee Entitlements and Redundancy Scheme (GEERS) scheme which pays employees their statutory entitlements if it turned out to be the case that the company could not meet its commitments. Mr Taylor said that he understood this would be the number one agenda at the first creditors meeting, and that employees, contractors and suppliers should expect to get more information then.

Please contact Angus Taylor on 0413 963 113 if there are queries.