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If you thought the Australian Workers' Union just covered workers in rural areas and in mining, manufacturing and construction, think again! The AWU also has coverage of a diversity of fields, including public sector workers in national parks and infrastructure maintenance. We take a look at the essential work they do and services they provide.

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Known as the city of the arts and the capital of the "Festival State", Adelaide is also home to some of Australia's major manufacturing plants. It's no easy ride, but sometimes hard work and celebrations can go hand in hand. Here's a postcard from Adelaide.

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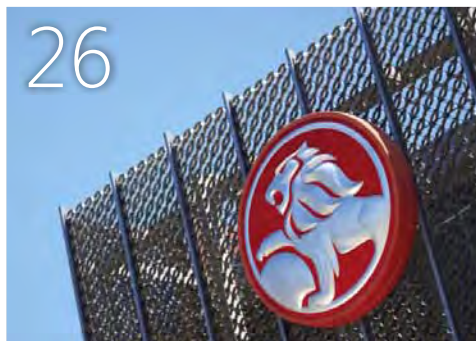
For every celebrity who forges a successful career in the limelight, there are hundreds who have their moment in the sun and then fade away. We take a look back at some of yesterday's in-your-face faces and see what they're up to now.

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Bill Ludwig
National President
Queensland Branch
Secretary

BILL LUDWIG

THE UGLY SHADOW OF HOWARD'S WORKCHOICES

We don't have to stretch our memories too far back to recall the very dark days under John Howard's WorkChoices regime and the effect that these laws had on ordinary, hard-working Australians.

Prior to its election in 2007, and with the help of the broader Australian union movement, the Australian Labor Party set its mind squarely on the challenge of repealing this most extreme and anti-worker piece of legislation, and replacing it with a more balanced and workable set of laws that protect the rights of workers and give them and their unions the right to challenge the decisions of the bosses before a truly independent umpire, Fair Work Australia.

Unlike Howard, Labor consulted widely before introducing the new Fair Work Act. Under the guidance of then Industrial Relations Minister Julia Gillard, the Labor government consulted with academics, legal professionals, business groups and the Australian union movement to try to achieve a system that fairly accommodates everyone's interests, and that ensures Australia's ongoing prosperity.

The naked opportunism of Howard in ramming his WorkChoices legislation through both houses of parliament after winning control of the Senate stood in stark contrast to the measured, inclusive and balanced approach of the newly elected Labor government.

As part of that balance, the Labor government proposed a review of the new Fair Work Act within four years of its operation. This job is being done now.

But watch this space. The rhetoric from the mega rich and bosses' clubs is now starting to heat up, and shortly will reach fever pitch as they attempt to resuscitate the corpse that is WorkChoices.

What did Tony Abbott promise not that long ago? "Dead. Buried. Cremated". This union wouldn't trust those weasel words as far as we could throw the pretender himself.

"The rhetoric from the mega rich .. will reach fever pitch as they attempt to resuscitate the corpse that is WorkChoices"

DEAD AND BURIED?: The AWU isn't convinced by Tony Abbott's assurances on WorkChoices.



Photography: Getty Images, Newspix



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West Australian
Branch Secretary



Wayne Hanson
South Australian
Branch Secretary

PAUL HOWES

RESERVE BANK COSTS AUSTRALIAN JOBS

There's nothing more disturbing than seeing hard-working Australians facing the prospect of job cuts as the companies they work for struggle to survive.

I know first-hand the anxiety and distress that go hand in hand with the loss of an income. Sadly, 2012 has kicked off with many workers having to face this tough reality.

The manufacturing crisis is hitting Australia hard. Firms in the steel, aluminium, automotive and now oil industries continue to feel the pressure of our two-speed economy. Inevitably, decisions are being made in boardrooms on whether to keep these manufacturing jobs in Australia.

But the worst part of the manufacturing crisis is that countless jobs could have been saved if the Reserve Bank (RBA) had lowered the official cash rate in February to put downward pressure on the record high Aussie dollar. The decision to keep interest rates where they are wasn't just a kick in the guts to every Australian homeowner – it was as if the RBA was sending one million manufacturing workers a termination notice.

It's just plain economic mismanagement.

The RBA ignored 25 out of Australia's 27 leading economists. It ignored warnings from the International Monetary Fund. It ignored domestic companies begging for a rate cut. And it ignored the crucial fact that millions of Australians rely on these jobs to feed their families.

We know the high Aussie dollar means our industries will continue finding it impossible to make a buck on the global stage. We know a loss of global market share equals a reduction in production, and that means job cuts. Most importantly, we know downward pressure on our dollar would mean that our members not directly employed by mining continue to have a job. Because it's not just manufacturing that's hurting. The high dollar cripples tourism. It cripples education. It cripples agriculture.

The AWU has been telling everyone who'll listen: we've got to do more to secure a future for manufacturing, because when the mining magnates have finished squeezing every last drop of mineral wealth out of this great land, it'll be these industries that ensure our livelihood.

We've put the federal government on notice: we won't sit back and cop thousands of hardworking Australians facing the axe just because they don't work in mining. We'll stand united with our 135,000 members and fight.

We've put the manufacturing crisis at the top of the national agenda. We called for a broad-based approach to support struggling manufacturers and we've seen a strong response from the federal government, with much needed support for the automotive, steel and aluminium industries.

Now, we're turning our focus on the RBA. It's time for it to accept that it's not right for sectors like manufacturing to be under sustained threat due to its inaction. It's time to recognise that it's just not sustainable for our economy to have interest rates that are so much higher than the rest of the world. Frankly, it's time the RBA started considering all sectors of the Australian economy, not just the top end of town.



Paul Howes
National Secretary

“... it was as if the RBA was sending one million manufacturing workers a termination notice.”



TROUBLED TIMES: workers face uncertainty as companies struggle in a tough economic climate.



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MAILCALL

YOUR NEWS AND VIEWS

A BIG THANK YOU

I'd like to personally thank those members who took the time to complete our members' survey mailed out with the last issue of *The Australian Worker*.

We conducted this national survey to give you the opportunity to tell us what's important to you: your job, your industry, your

union and the issues around your workplace.

Last year, the AWU put manufacturing right at the top of the national agenda. We shone a spotlight on the economic crisis crippling Australian companies, and in turn, the federal government established the

Prime Minister's Taskforce on Manufacturing.

This year, the fight goes on. Our industries will continue to feel the pressure of the two-speed economy and the high Australian dollar, and our union will continue to fight for a future for good Australian jobs.

That's why this survey was so important to us; to make sure we hear your voices loud and clear,

and that you get the wages and conditions you deserve.

This year will be a big one for us. But no matter what challenges lie ahead, I know that thanks to the commitment of each and every member of our union, we'll be Stronger Together.

Paul Howes
NATIONAL SECRETARY

AUSTRALIAN MANUFACTURING: WHERE HAS IT GONE?

When I was a young adult entering the workforce in Geelong, the opportunity for employment was ripe. You could easily move from one job to the next, gathering skills.

From the mid-1970s to the early 1990s, Geelong was a manufacturing mecca, with a thriving footwear, textile and automotive industry, with companies such as Candy footwear, Burrows Industries, Backwell IXL, Ford Motor Company, Pilkington, International Harvester, Geelong Cement, Winchester, CSIRO, Alcoa Aluminium Smelter, Australian Wire Mills, Shell Refinery and many more. Then you had all the small company's servicing the large companies. Where are they all now? When is a government going to stand up and protect our manufacturing industry in Australia?

When is a government going to listen to what the public wants, and look to the future and see that we cannot survive on tourism?

We cannot continue along the path we are on. The government must act to save our manufacturing industry, not only in the Geelong region, but throughout Australia.

I have voiced my concerns to AWU Victorian Branch Secretary Cesar Melham and National Secretary Paul Howes about the future of the Australian cement manufacturing industry, in which I have been employed for 22 years. I know they will be there, along with my AWU comrades, voicing concerns to the government if and when the threat of imported cement becomes real in Australia.

Wayne McKinlay
VICTORIA

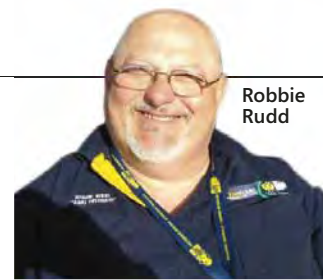
FOND FAREWELL

When I joined the AWU 29 years ago, I was an extremely reluctant recruit. I did not have much time for unions, but I signed up anyway.

Now, as I am about to leave BlueScope at Western Port, Vic where I have been site delegate, I want to thank the AWU and all my fellow members for the extraordinary experience of being part of this union.

I have learnt a great deal, and had many memorable moments. The experience of marching shoulder-to-shoulder with other AWU members, and other unionists through the streets of Melbourne to protest against WorkChoices, and other industrial injustices, will stay with me forever.

The friendship and the camaraderie of the people I have



Robbie Rudd

met and worked with form a big part of my life. In the AWU I have found a sense of belonging and acceptance that so many people find lacking in the world today.

The AWU is one of the most important parts of my life, if not the most important – and ever will it be so.

I will remain a member, of course, and hope that one day I may again have a chance to serve my union and my fellow members.

In the meantime, thanks for the memories and keep up the good work.

Robbie Rudd
VICTORIA

HAVE YOUR SAY IN YOUR MAGAZINE

Send correspondence to members@nat.awu.net.au or Australian Workers' Union, Level 10, 377-383 Sussex Street, Sydney, NSW 2000. All letters and emails must include the sender's name and AWU membership number along with address and phone number for verification purposes (these will not be published).

By submitting your letter for publication, you agree that we may edit the letter for legal, space or other reasonable reasons and may, after publication in the magazine, republish it on the internet or in other media.

Views expressed on the "Mail Call" page are not necessarily those of the AWU.



The author of next issue's "Star Letter" will receive a 12-month subscription to their choice of either *Top Gear*, *The Australian Women's Weekly*, *Australian Geographic* or *House and Garden* magazines.

NOTICE OF PROPOSED AMALGAMATION

A General Meeting of The Australian Workers Union, West Australian Branch Industrial Union of Workers held on 15th February 2012 in Perth endorsed the proposed amalgamation with The Forest Products, Furnishing and Allied Industries Industrial Union of Workers, WA and the proposed rules of the amalgamated Union.

The Union intends to apply for registration of the proposed amalgamation and rules to the Registrar of the Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission 35 days after the date of this issue of *The Australian Worker*. A member may object to the proposed amalgamation by writing to the Registrar of Western Australian Industrial Relations Commission within 35 days of this issue of *The Australian Worker*.

For further information or a copy of the amalgamated Union's Rules, members can contact AWU WA Branch on (08) 9221 1686.

International Women's Day on March 8 reminded us how far women have come since the dark days of being denied the right to vote, and how far they still have to go to gain equal opportunities and equal pay. However, unions like the AWU are on the case. Donna Reeves looks at women and work, the Union's *Women in the AWU* campaign and the dynamic future ahead.

A WOMAN'S WORK PLACE



There's an old saying, the more things change, the more they stay the same. When Dame Mary Gilmore – a member of the first executive of the Australian Worker's Union (and the first woman to have her own column in *The Australian Worker*) wrote the following in 1927, who could have imagined that the issues she raised would reflect the issues some women are still grappling with more than 80 years later.

"A man who would not dream of robbing a woman who sat at his own table, and who, in turn sat at hers on a return visit, will have no hesitation in robbing, especially by overcharge, women in the pangs of childbirth, women who are widowed by accident, children made fatherless by overwork, men who are maimed and helpless as victims of industry," she wrote.

Dame Mary, a fierce unionist unafraid to speak her mind, was referring to changes to the Maternity Act and the Workers' Compensation Act, which she saw as benefitting doctors and chemists much more than the people it was intended to help; namely, women. Her concern for the women's rights was rightly placed, and her strength in highlighting inequality forms part of a proud tradition of women in Australia uniting to fight for equal rights and decent working conditions.

One hundred years earlier, in 1827, women living and working at the Parramatta Female Factory (a factory above a gaol that housed convicts who'd been transported to Australia but not assigned to work as servants) rioted against their appalling food and living conditions. In doing so, they were responsible for Australia's first industrial action.



WOMEN'S BUSINESS: forging ahead in a range of once male-dominated industries.

As International Women's Day enters its 101st year, it's important to take time to reflect on some of the victories women have had over the years. Dame Enid Lyons became the first woman elected to federal parliament in 1943. In 1969, after a long and tough battle, working women were finally awarded equal pay rates with men for doing comparable work, with parity finally being reached in 1972. And, in the same year, the federal government passed the Federal Childcare Act, which provided government funding of childcare for working mothers.

As significant as these achievements are, all the battles have not been won and there is plenty left to fight for. Research recently undertaken by the AWU highlights that there are still some glaring inequalities between men and women. Key findings in the *Women in the Workforce* report illustrate that there is still some way to go before true equality is reached. These include:

- Women earn on average \$237 less than men a week. In order to close this gap women would need to work an extra 63 days a year.
- Less than one per cent of the female working population work in three of the AWU's key industries: manufacturing, mining and construction.
- In 1978, the number of women working part time was 33 per cent. By 2010, that figure had risen to 46 per cent.

Low pay and an under-representation in the highly paid mining, manufacturing and construction industries do not bode well for women in retirement.

"This engagement in low-paid work has

harmful effects upon retirement, because females have significantly less saved in superannuation and thereby become a burden on the public purse," the *Women in the Workforce* report says. "The most recent account of the gap in superannuation savings was taken in 2006. It found that the average balance for women was \$35,520 compared to \$69,050 for men. Under these figures females have almost half the superannuation as men over the life cycle, having harmful effects upon retirement."

EQUAL PAY? WE'RE ON THE CASE

So what is the Australian union movement doing about pay inequity?

"The continuing gender wage gap is a huge concern for our union," AWU National Secretary Paul Howes says. "Since Equal Pay for Equal Work was introduced, it has barely budged from 17 per cent."

Paul says that there are a number of reasons for this cause and effect. "Women are more likely to work in sectors like community health that are significantly underpaid," he says. "Women are also more likely to pursue part-time work and spend more time away from the workforce."

However Paul is quick to point out that these factors should not be used as excuses and should be seen as challenges to overcome.

"That's why the AWU is giving special focus to making sure our female members receive the best possible wages and conditions that support their workplace participation and strive towards narrowing the ongoing gender wage gap," Paul says.

VALE MARGARET WHITLAM

She was a prime minister's wife who refused to be a silent, smiling "accessory" to her powerful husband. By doing so paved the way for other women to emerge confidently from behind their partners in public life. Gracious, yet totally unpretentious, Margaret Whitlam was never afraid to voice an opinion and, with a deeply held commitment to social justice and a powerhouse intellect, those opinions always lent support to egalitarianism and a fair go for Australians from all backgrounds.

As the wife of 1970s Labor PM Gough Whitlam, Margaret took her role in public life seriously. A frequent guest on radio and television, she also had a regular, widely read magazine column. Warm and witty, Margaret earned the respect of Australians from all walks of life, so much so that in 1983 she received the Order of Australia and in 1997 was named an Australian Living National Treasure. She was a life member of the Labor Party and her contribution to making her beloved country a fairer and more equitable place will always be remembered by the Labor movement.

WOMEN SPEAK Women in the public eye share their views on the status of women, unions and the importance of celebrating International Women's Day.

TRACEY SPICER



"On International Women's Day, it is important to look backwards as well as forwards. We must never forget the crucial contribution of the union movement in progressing women's rights in the workplace. One of the biggest victories was won this year – the landmark Fair Work Australia ruling on equal pay. Hopefully, this will set a precedent for other workplaces. But there's still a long way to go. We need quotas for women on boards, mentoring programs for those in middle and upper management, and the abolition of age discrimination. Most women don't have enough superannuation and this needs to be addressed urgently. So, on this day, we celebrate what we have achieved, and focus on what we are yet to achieve."

LISA FORREST



"Whenever someone talks about unions, I recount the story of a friend who went to work for a major hotel chain in Honolulu. He was appalled to find the workers, mostly women, who cleaned the rooms were not eligible for sick pay until they had worked there for 10 years. And there was an unstated policy that workers were sacked just before they reached the 10-year mark. In Australia there are challenges ahead. One of the big challenges is that we have such a high rate of women working part-time who have no access to benefits like sick pay and super. In economic terms, it seems in the interest of the government and unions to work to improve that situation. Unions have a fundamentally important role in collective bargaining."

WENDY HARMER



"I'm a member of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA). We are the people who inform and entertain."

In some sections of the media today, women are still considered eye-candy. Their opinions are not wanted and the old adage that the marketers use for everything female, "shrink it and pink it", still seems to apply.

Of course it's the informers and entertainers who set the standard for how women are perceived and how they should be regarded in our society. They're at the front-line, highly visible.

A strong, united voice can push media proprietors and producers to keep making the changes women require in the workplace to participate fully.

And I am proud to be a long-time union member."

CORINNE GRANT



"Unions have a big part to play today. As long as there are large organisations that represent employers, there needs to be the same for workers. It just makes sense. However, I think we need to work a little smarter. I'm not sure the union movement as a whole has learnt how to harness the power of social media. That being said, the Australian Nursing Federation has been doing a very intelligent, and very classy, job with their campaign in Victoria regarding wages and nurse-to-patient ratios. The union movement as a whole can take a lot from this predominantly female-based union. After all, inequality of pay between men and women still exists. That is frustrating. What's even more frustrating is a study that came out in America showing that women are less likely to negotiate the same salaries as men, and when they do, they are often seen as being aggressive, as opposed to men who are seen as go-getters. Unions have achieved many things. Workplace safety has been a big one. Unions have historically played a large role in social justice issues as well, from environmental issues to equality and gay marriage. It's important that unions show themselves to be a collection of politically and publicly engaged people."

GED KEARNEY



ACTU President

"The recent equal pay case in the community services sector is a high-profile example of unions fighting tough battles to secure rights for women and to improve their lives. But many Australians of working age today may not recall that before unions won the fight for paid parental leave in 2011, we won the battle for unpaid parental leave. That was back in 1979, when many of today's mums – and dads – were the babies of the beneficiaries.

"Unions have been strong champions of women's rights in the workplace, before and since that major milestone, demonstrated through achievements like carers' leave, anti-discrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action legislation, emergency leave, the right to request flexible work arrangements and an extension of unpaid parental leave up to 24 months.

"Also, in replacing WorkChoices, the Fair Work Act delivered real benefits for women and workers with family responsibilities, but there is more to be done. The focus for unions into the future includes the expansion of the right to request flexible work arrangements to all workers with caring responsibilities and for appeal rights against employers' refusal. We also want expanded access to carers' leave."



EARNING THE VOTE: Above: In Britain in 1913 Emily Davison was fatally injured as she tried to stop the King's horse to draw attention to the Women's Suffragette movement. Above Right: The memorial procession for her passes through Shaftesbury Avenue, London. Right: A suffragette is arrested on a London street by two policemen.



WE'VE COME A LONG WAY BABY!

International Women's Day (IWD) was first held on March 19, 1911. The day was the brainchild of Clara Zetkin, who at the time was leader of the Women's Office for Germany's Social Democratic Party. Clara had proposed the idea the year before at the second International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen, and it was unanimously supported by more than 100 women representing 17 countries. Her vision was to create a day that celebrated the economic, political and social achievements of women, and was to include all women regardless of their economic, political or racial differences.

Since 1913, IWD has been held on March 8, and according to its organisers "it is an occasion for looking back on past struggles and accomplishments, and more importantly, for looking ahead to the untapped potential and opportunities that await future generations of women."

It wasn't until 1975, International Women's Year, that the United Nations (UN) held its first official celebrations for International Women's Day. In a

significant step forward for women's recognition and rights, two years later the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed by member states. This was the same year that Australia first celebrated IWD, with the federal government holding the first national conference on the status of women.

IWD remains a crucial opportunity to keep women's issues on national and international agendas. Despite greater protection for the rights of women, and improvements in access to education, health care and employment, women still do not enjoy the same rights and opportunities as men in many areas.

There is good news, though. Unions, like the Australian Workers' Union, recognise the importance of giving a greater voice to women in the workplace and will continue to fight to end gender disparities.

SOURCE: International Women's Day and Australian Human Rights Commission

WOMEN UNITED

WOMEN
IN THE
AWU



AWU members with Senior Deputy President of Fair Work Australia Lea Drake celebrated International Women's Day at a function held at the Union's Greater NSW Branch.

is Cambodian, to put up her hand to be a first-aid officer.

Ingham's is a family oriented company and has a good attitude to female employees. Women are not overlooked for promotions and we get the same pay as the men.

JANE HOFFMANN

I attended the AWU's International Women's Day function where FWA's Lea Drake told us to always strive for our goals.

I'm an OH&S officer at one of Ingham's farms. I'm also an AWU Delegate. I love working for them and I'd like to have the area manager's job one day. Lea inspired me.

Ingham's has a big OH&S department and I've had good opportunities. Women do hard labour farm work just like the boys; there is no discrimination. I've talked with women who work for other companies who don't get equal pay and are often overlooked for promotions.

I would like to have kids one day so I consider maternity leave entitlements to be very important. Some women don't have that so I think we've still got some work to do.

PETA THOMSON

International Women's Day is still relevant and important. We're lucky in Australia, women have the chance to have their say.

When I was working in the underground industry, I was the only woman on site. The guys were a bit standoffish at first, but after a while they got to respect me for being strong and doing the same work they did.

I've been an operator at Alcoa now for 17 years. The boys are in tune with the women they work with. They have said that having a woman on site has changed things for the better for them ergonomically.

We get the same pay for the same work. It would be nice to see a more women higher up, but there aren't barriers due to gender. I'm a convenor for the AWU. I've got a great set of male stewards and I try to learn from them.

My company appreciates that the AWU is more willing to talk with them rather than just make demands. We try to create solutions. People, especially women, shouldn't fear unions. What we have today in terms of equal pay and maternity leave and promotional opportunities is down to unions.

The Australian Workers' Union believes that women have a major role to play in the Union and in the pursuit of workplace democracy.

"I've seen the face of AWU workplaces change dramatically over the last 15 years," AWU National Secretary Paul Howes says. "Male-dominated industries are diversifying. Women increasingly are becoming key contributors in industries like mining, manufacturing and civil construction."

Paul believes that this career diversity that is more accepting of women should be celebrated and encouraged. "As the face of our workplaces change, we know the Union has to keep up. The AWU is reflecting that change with our *Women in the AWU* campaign."

The Union's campaign is about recognising the contribution women make to industry, and also acknowledging that women face particular challenges in the workplace.

"The *Women in the AWU* campaign is giving those contributions and challenges a special focus within our union," Paul says.

JANIE PARAONE

I was the first female electrician in New Zealand and the first female industrial mechanic in NSW, but the function put on by the AWU was the first time I have ever participated in International Women's Day.

It was a great event. Lea Drake, Senior Deputy President of Fair Work Australia, spoke and made an impression on me. She told us she has always worked in male-dominated areas, and said, "Never go into anything with expectations". I never do.

I work for Ingham's on a poultry breeding farm as a leading hand. I'm an AWU Delegate, and I've just been promoted to be an OH&S officer. Twenty-five years ago all the workers were women and the managers were men. Now there are two female managers and 40 per cent male workers. Most of the workers are migrants with English as a second language.

Many of the women have to be encouraged to participate, largely because of shyness. I've finally got one of the women, who

ANNA WATT

I started working in the steel industry 23 years ago for BHP, now OneSteel, in Whyalla, South Australia. I am a Level 5 Operator, working with hot saws. For 15 years, I was the only woman working on my shift. Most of the time being the only female was okay. I got used to working with the blokes and they got used to working with me. My husband works for the same company and we didn't have the same shifts for a long time. We didn't see a lot of each other but when the kids were little it meant we didn't need a baby sitter. Even though my children are grown up now, I can see that access to childcare is still a big issue that needs to be addressed. But it's great that we get paid the same wages as men now.

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HARMONIOUS RELATIONS

The Fair Work Act 2009 is already making its mark on the nation's industrial landscape and, Bianca Wordley discovers, the new industrial umpire has been given a big thumbs-up by both lawyers and unions.

With tight economic conditions, profits being impacted by the high Australian dollar and uncertainty in federal politics, the need for a stable and fair industrial relations system has never been more important. As businesses look for ways to claw back earnings, it's possible wage and conditions claims could be undermined. The introduction of the Fair Work Act (the Act) and the establishment of Fair Work Australia (FWA) has certainly

moved in the right direction to protect workers and it can only be improved upon.

AWU National Secretary Paul Howes says that over the next decade, Australia's industrial climate will be greatly impacted by the result of the next election.

"When workers go to the ballot box they can vote for a Labor government with a proven track record on protecting workers' rights by returning fairness and decency to Australian workplaces –

or they can vote for a coalition with a proven record of stripping away workers' rights. I know who I'd trust to protect our rights at work – and it's not the Coalition," Paul says.

Unsurprisingly, the Act has its share of criticism from industry groups that believe the legislation is biased towards unions. The claim is strongly refuted by the nation's leading industrial lawyers and the AWU, who jointly agree the Act is a vast improvement

WORK IT OUT: AWU National Secretary Paul Howes believes it's a no-brainer. A vote for the Coalition will see a return to the unfairness of WorkChoices.



“It’s the same old critics, big business and the Coalition, making the same old phony claims...”

on the Howard government’s now defunct WorkChoices.

Paul says the Act has largely been a success. “Despite its critics, the fact is under the Act we have seen fairness and balance returned to the workplaces of Australia with a decrease in industrial action and gains in productivity post WorkChoices,” he says. “It’s the same old critics, big business and the Coalition, making the same old phony claims about unions having the upper hand now that the Act has replaced WorkChoices. It’s utter nonsense. Statistically, we have seen a reduction of industrial action under the Act with an increase in good-faith bargaining.”

Paul says “panicked calls” by Fair Work Act opponents that, post WorkChoices, there would be an onslaught of wage cases that would sink Australia’s economy have been unfounded. “We have seen nothing of the sort, in fact we have an economy that is the envy of the world,” he says. “I believe the Act has returned fairness and balance to industrial relations in this country.”

A QUESTION OF BALANCE

The Fair Work Act has helped AWU members in a number of ways.

- It has delivered workplace relations laws to all Australians that are fair, flexible and promote productivity and economic growth.
- It has protected workers by providing a guaranteed safety net of fair and

enforceable national employment standards and modern national awards.

- It has removed the insecurity of Australian workplace agreements that were undermining AWU members’ wages and conditions fought for by previous generations of Australian workers.
- It has made sure that no member or delegate can be persecuted, discriminated against or singled-out due to their involvement with the Union in their workplace.

Despite supporting the Act, Paul says there are some areas that need addressing. The AWU has lodged its submission to FWA for review asking for a range of improvements.

“Right of Entry is the main area where our union would like to see improvements to the legislation,” Paul says.

“It’s important the AWU can speak to our members on site in a place where it’s convenient for workers. For most workers, the only opportunity to discuss their concerns and issues at work is on their breaks.

“No one should be expected to waste any of their valuable break time to seek out the union elsewhere on site. The AWU should be able to serve our members where they take their breaks; in crib or lunch rooms.”

The Union has also put forward suggested amendments to the approval process for greenfields agreements and better bargaining rights for low-paid workers.



WHAT IS FAIR WORK AUSTRALIA?

Fair Work Australia (FWA) is the national workplace tribunal headed by Justice Iain Ross. It’s an independent body with power to carry out a range of functions, including dispute resolution, industrial action, enterprise bargaining, termination of employment, the safety net of minimum wages, employment conditions and other workplace matters.

FWA was established in 2009, following the enactment of the *Fair Work Act 2009*. The new tribunal assumed the functions of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, the Australian Industrial Registry, the Australian Fair Pay Commission and some of the functions of the Workplace Authority. It also has the responsibilities relating to the registration of unions and employer associations and their financial accountability.

Go to www.fwa.gov.au for further information.

THE FAIR WORK ACT A LAWYER'S VIEW

Maurice Blackburn Lawyers
Principal Giri Sivaraman talks about
industrial relations in Australia



LEGAL EAGLE:
Giri Sivaraman from
Maurice Blackburn
Lawyers.

Maurice Blackburn Lawyers Principal Giri Sivaraman agrees the new workplace relations legislation has been a triumph. He says that although there are some changes required, particularly in the area of bullying and harassment, overall the Act is a vast improvement on WorkChoices.

"Part of the success of the Act has been the restoration of some of the powers of the renamed Fair Work Australia and the establishment of bargaining protocols to attempt to ensure that negotiations for enterprise agreements are conducted in good faith," Giri says.

He also says the general protections provisions of the Act represent significant steps forward in the protection of freedom of association and employee rights.

"For the first time in Australian industrial history, employees have protection against victimisation for making a complaint or inquiry in relation to their employment," he says.

"Traditionally, the courts, as a consequence of legislation, have taken a very narrow view on what constitutes a breach of freedom of association. The Act has introduced the concept of general protections or adverse action, and this has levelled up the playing field for those of us who represent employees in the workplace."

While the new legislation has not made it easier to win these claims, Giri says it has made the system fairer, and employees now have a greater chance of positive outcomes.

"Maurice Blackburn has had significant success in this field and I would like to think we have been at the forefront of the litigation surrounding what is a new and developing area," Giri says.

Giri disputes claims the Fair Work Act is biased towards unions. "Whilst I agree that the Act has levelled up the playing field from the heavily biased WorkChoices provisions, the Act is by no means a worker or unions' paradise," he says. "There are still strict restrictions on the taking of industrial action, right of entry for unions remains extremely limited and unions are still prevented from trying to negotiate terms and conditions across industry, as opposed to single enterprises.

"The people who complain that the Act is biased towards unions should really read the Act sometime."

THE FAIR WORK ACT A UNIONIST'S VIEW

AWU National Secretary
Paul Howes talks about industrial
relations in Australia



The Australian Workers' Union has had some big successes in the past year, what have been your highlights?

First and foremost, our campaign against Rio Tinto saw a huge win for workers' rights across Australia when in June, the company was slapped with a FWA order granting the AWU access to crib rooms at their aluminium smelter

in Bell Bay, Tasmania. The decision was symbolic of Rio's waning stranglehold over their workforce, with the Act recognising the fundamental right of these workers to talk to their union.

Has the Act been a success or are there still issues that need to be addressed?

There's no doubt the Act has changed the face of industrial relations in this country. It is fundamentally good, practical legislation.

Under the Act, we've seen fairness and balance returned to workplaces right across Australia – alongside a decrease in industrial action and gains in productivity that were hamstrung under WorkChoices – that's a success in my opinion.

But it won't surprise you to hear that we always think there's more room for improvement. That's why our union lodged a submission to FWA – calling for improvements to unions' rights of entry to workplaces, how greenfield agreements are negotiated and better bargaining rights for low-paid workers.

How has the Act helped AWU members and what would you like see done further?

The Act has delivered workplace relations laws that are fair, flexible and promote productivity and economic growth. It has protected workers by providing a guaranteed safety net of fair and enforceable National Employment Standards and modern national awards.

It has removed the uncertainty and insecurity of Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) that were undermining our members' wages and conditions fought for by countless generations of Australian workers. Most importantly, the Act has made sure no member or delegate can be persecuted, discriminated against or singled out for involvement with their union in the workplace. Put simply, it recognises Australian workers' fundamental right to talk to their union – something we should never lose sight of.

THE FAIR WORK ACT THE MINISTER'S VIEW

The Federal Minister for Employment & Workplace Relations, Bill Shorten, talks about industrial relations in Australia



Has the Fair Work Act been a success or are there still issues that you believe should be addressed?

Yes, it has been a success. Overall, the system is working well. We have record numbers of enterprise agreements being made, good (but not excessive) growth in wages and low levels of industrial disputes. The evidence shows that the system works. In 2010-2011, FWA approved 7782 enterprise agreements (EAs), compared with 39 applications to suspend or terminate industrial action. This shows that the vast majority of employers, employees and their representatives are getting on with the job of bargaining under the Fair Work system.

Of course, there may be some room for improvement. The federal government has committed to a post-implementation review of the Fair Work Act, which is being undertaken by an external expert panel. If the evidence shows changes are necessary, then we will be open to addressing them. However, I believe the fundamentals of the system are strong and sound and we will not change them.

There's been some significant industrial action over the past year. How has FWA helped to resolve these?

The Fair Work system provides some very important tools to assist bargaining negotiations. EA negotiations must be conducted in good faith, and FWA can step in to make sure this happens. Where bargaining negotiations become deadlocked, FWA can be asked to conciliate the dispute. It can also assist parties through mediation, making recommendations and by arbitration if the parties agree.

The recent high-profile disputes may sell newspapers, but the reality is that the vast majority of parties are making enterprise agreements without taking industrial action.

I said at the time that Qantas's actions in grounding the airline and threatening to lock out its workforce was extreme.

Once Qantas took the step of grounding its fleet, the Gillard government acted in the national interest to bring an end to the dispute by asking FWA to terminate the industrial action. FWA held urgent hearings and, prior to the lockout being implemented, agreed that

this was necessary to avoid significant harm to our economy. Not only did the Fair Work Act pass its biggest test, but the reports I have been getting about the progress of those disputes have been very encouraging. For example, Qantas and the Australian Licensed Aircraft Engineers Association have now reached agreement. Arbitration of the other disputes will commence shortly, but I understand the parties have continued to negotiate.

Critics will say the Qantas dispute proves that strikes are out of control under the Fair Work system, but the evidence simply does not support this - the vast majority of agreements are made without disruption.

Detractors of the Fair Work Act say it is biased towards unions.

The Fair Work Act embodies this government's fundamental commitment to promoting fairness and balance in Australian workplace relations. The Act underpins a balanced system for good workplace relations - one that strengthens national economic prosperity while promoting social inclusion for all Australians. Real economic prosperity and growth requires fairness and security in the workplace. The only bias in recent years was the Howard government's anti-union attitudes.

How has FWA helped improve working conditions in Australia?

FWA helps improve the working conditions for ordinary Australians by increasing minimum wages, which have gone up by nearly \$46 per week since the Fair Work Act came into effect. FWA also recently handed down the historic first-ever successful pay equity claim in the national system: 150,000 of Australia's lowest paid workers will benefit from substantial pay rises of between 23 and 45 percent. This will make a real difference to these workers and their families.

What is your vision for FWA and its continuing role?

I would like to see FWA make sure that the award safety net continues to evolve. For example, FWA is being asked this year to look at the wages paid to apprentices. First year apprentices get paid just \$6.32 an hour, and

there is evidence of some drop out because of this. On the other hand, Australia needs skilled tradespeople and we need to make it affordable for employers to take on apprentices. FWA is being asked to examine apprentice pay levels, hear all the arguments and balance these interests. As we face more changes in our society - the ageing of our workforce is something that springs to mind - we will also need to change the ways we work and our awards, so FWA's role in the evolution of the safety net will continue to be important.

I'd like to see the Fair Work system do more than just sort out arguments. We are living in an exciting yet challenging era. With the high Australian dollar putting pressure on local jobs, everyone in the workplace needs to pull together and find creative ways of doing things to be more competitive. We need workplaces where people are encouraged and rewarded for ideas and efforts at work. I'd like to see the Fair Work system help meet these challenges and support workplaces that might be muddling along to become high-performing businesses and great places to work.

How do you see Australia's industrial landscape changing over the next decade? What can workers expect?

With new occupations emerging, workplaces evolve: even if they are virtual environments, they will still be workplaces. Workplaces will still exist as places where employees interact with each other and with their managers. This means there will always be a role for unions to advocate on behalf of employees and represent their interests. However, in a world with increasing competition for depleting natural resources, it will be important for unions to both represent their members, and also work cooperatively with employers to help drive productivity and innovation. This offers opportunities for employers, workers and unions - they will need to find new and better ways of relating to each other.

While I expect that we will see increasing emphasis on cooperation and good relationships in the workplace, there will still be a need for a strong safety net of rights and protections for workers.



AT YOUR SERVICE

The AWU doesn't just cover mining, manufacturing and construction. It covers a diversity of fields, including national parks, firefighting and local government infrastructural maintenance. Paul Robinson catches up with workers doing all sorts of things around the country – in the public interest.

The Australian Workers Union, the nation's oldest, was established in 1886, well before federation, and has coverage in all states. With over 135,000 members, the AWU umbrella casts a big shadow. If you get your hands dirty for work, then chances are you'll be covered by the AWU.

In its early days, the AWU primarily represented agricultural workers: shearers and farmhands. The union actually

developed from the Australasian Shearers' Union, formed in Victoria in 1886, which joined with NSW shearers to create the Amalgamated Shearers' Union of Australia the following year. The shearers then merged with the General Labourers' Union to create the AWU. After federation, under the new conciliation and arbitration system, the AWU became the first union to secure a federal award. The Pastoral Industry Award of 1907

gave farm workers a say in their pay and conditions for the first time.

As agriculture became less labour-intensive and the Australian workforce more urbanised, the focus has changed. The big industries such as manufacturing, metals, mining and construction are the ones that make headlines, but the AWU also represents workers throughout various service, government and miscellaneous occupations.



ABOVE: DSE worker Rod Lynn.

Workers in areas as diverse as road maintenance, traffic control, forestry, parks and wildlife, horticulture, horseracing, hairdressing, rabbit and kangaroo trapping, fruit-picking and pharmaceuticals come under AWU protection.

AWU National Secretary Paul Howes says that people are often surprised when he tells them that the AWU has a sizable public sector membership.

“Our union is more often associated with industries like manufacturing, mining or agriculture” Paul says. “The fact is we have AWU members working in a wide variety of public-sector jobs right across the county from healthcare to firefighting and local government. It’s something we’re very proud of.”

These workers perform important jobs, often under extreme conditions. Here’s a look at some of the less well-known areas that come under the AWU’s wing.

VICTORIA

DEPARTMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT (DSE)

The AWU looks after DSE and Parks Victoria, the other agency that manages state parks. In the peak season there are about 700 DSE workers and 300 with Parks Victoria. The DSE is the main agency charged with the suppression of wild fire and the management of controlled burns. As in NSW, the big worry is lack of bodies on the ground and with a new government looking at eliminating 3600 public sector jobs, firefighters are concerned about not being able to meet prescribed burn targets for autumn – and that experienced staff will look for jobs in other industries.

The AWU Victorian Branch is concerned that the government is relying too much on private contractors, who are generally also timber harvesters, rather than maintaining their own fleet of heavy machinery. However, because more forests are being “locked up”, there are less contractors and more reliance on aircraft. But there are limitations on aircraft



ISLAND HOME: Teerk Roo Ra (Peel Island). BELOW LEFT: Prison on St Helena Island. RIGHT: Roland Dowling.



QUEENSLAND

PARKS AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

The AWU has looked after park rangers in Queensland for about 35 years. Some are land-based, others work in the marine parks – about 400 members out of about 600 to 700 in total. The current state government has made commitments to increase the overall size of the national park. The big concern is that more hectares of park will need more rangers to maintain it.

For the AWU Queensland Branch, size matters. Queensland is a big state in land area, so there is considerable variation between what a ranger in west Queensland might do compared to a ranger in the wet tropics of the north. The big issue in the drier parts of Queensland is fire protection, doing controlled burns, for example. Members are also involved in the aftermath of natural disaster and man-made disasters, such as the floods and the Moreton Bay oil spill. Members are involved in assisting the State Emergency Services and local councils and helping the community. Again, due to the area covered and the range of responsibilities, the Branch believes that training more ground staff is a necessity.

Roland Dowling is a national parks ranger. “I started as a ranger in 1985. We manage three different parks in Moreton

Bay – Fort Lytton, St Helena Island and Teerk Roo Ra (Peel Island) with a good, multi-skilled crew. The sites have significant cultural heritage components. Lytton is a historic fort and quarantine station on the Brisbane River, St Helena has the remains of the old colonial prison, and Peel was the site of a lazaret (hospital) for leprosy sufferers. We are now joint-managing the island with traditional owners. We mow the grass, keep the facilities safe and clean, do conservation work and manage the commercial tourism operators who visit. St Helena is also a Ramsar-recognised wetlands site for waterbirds. Interestingly, the organisers of the 1891 shearers’ strike, which led to the formation of the Australian Labor Party, were gaoled on St Helena Island.”

“The organisers of the 1891 shearers’ strike... were gaoled on St Helena Island”



“Our planting season is coming up and we have 400-500 new trees to plant”

in heavy fire because of the smoke. Sometimes heavy fog mixes with smoke blocking visibility and the aircraft can't take off. On occasion there's not always ready access to water, which reduces options in an emergency.

The Union believes that there needs to be a core of ground field staff to ensure optimum operation. Given the number of horrific fires in recent times, the Union believes that increased staffing and services should be a priority.

Rod Lynn is a work centre coordinator and a very busy man. "I look after all the field staff – 10 permanent and 12 summer fire crew. We have three bulldozers going and our permanents are clearing firebreaks ready for a massive fuel-reduction burning program. Our summer crew is slashing firebreaks around townships. We cover the Yarra Valley, probably about 60,000ha, and the Port Phillip district. I'm down as a first attack dozer operator for fires. I also do air incendiary out of choppers for back burning, and I'm involved in setting up camps.

"We're on standby on total fire ban days and can be sent anywhere in Victoria. We're part of the emergency services, so we've got crews going away to floods. Last year we had fires in the east of the state and floods in the west. Sometimes in the first wave of fire you might be going up to 24 hours. It takes its toll on the body and we've got an older work force. I'm 52 and I've been 25 years in the department. There's not enough planning for what we need on the ground. The pressure is put on us and it's almost cost me my life.

"We were trying to round up fires in Gembrook State Forest and I was caught in the burn-over. My machine started breaking down, I lost the air conditioner and it went from 35 to about 140 degrees. I was going in and out of consciousness. My mates couldn't get to me. It was fate that I woke up and somehow hit the throttle on the machine and all of a sudden I came out of it enough to get going again. My time wasn't up.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The AWU in South Australia covers the outdoor field staff that work for councils. There is a high density of union membership, about 80 per cent. Good enterprise agreements have been negotiated over the years with wages and conditions generally well above award, and no forced redundancies, so there is job security. There are about 65 councils in South Australia.

According to the South Australian Branch, the work is varied. Some crews are bigger than others, depending on the size of the council. Workers are involved in infrastructure and asset maintenance, garbage collection, road construction and maintenance, concreting, paving, and horticultural and arboricultural work. They also work in building maintenance, because councils own a lot of toilet blocks and football clubs. The workforce has reduced over the years. There is some outsourcing,

GOING GREEN: Holdfast Bay Council worker Deane Pearce has enjoyed the change from concreting to tree planting and maintenance.

mostly due to the use of new machinery and technology.

Deane Pearce works for the City of Holdfast Bay Council. "It's a seaside council here in Adelaide. We cover Glenelg to Brighton.

"It's quite small, but we have a lot of tourism and there are beaches to maintain. Our planting season is coming up in May and we have 400-500 new trees to plant. We prune trees and remove others that have passed their use-by dates. There are six blokes in my gang and our response time is pretty quick. I've been with this council for nine and a half years. The trees are newish to me, I was a concreter before, but it's better greening than concreting. I'm doing my Certificate III in horticulture and arboristry at the moment. I love the outdoors environment. It's definitely a job with a future."



ABOVE: DEC fire crew supervisor Dene Cullin.

"A few weeks before that I was in a helicopter that caught fire, which caused some anxious moments before we could land and put it out. I'm a country boy and I love working in the bush and helping the community. We don't get paid enough, so it's not about the money. You've got to love it."

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION (DEC)

DEC workers are called conservation employees, even though the majority of their work is fighting bushfires and fire prevention. They are also observers and bombardiers in air fire crews, and incendiary operators. They carry out baiting programs for vermin such as foxes and feral cats, trapping for animal monitoring, do road maintenance and building, build bridges, and are traffic controllers when undertaking prescribed burning and fire suppression.

The crews are stationed mainly throughout the south-west forest regions of the state. There's a longstanding history of AWU membership, which traditionally came from the timber workers, whose job description included fire patrol, and over time evolved into a more environmental role. Out of 254 firefighters, there is about 90 per cent membership.

For AWU's Western Australian Branch, undermanning caused by budget constraints is the big issue. The Branch believes that more employees are necessary because the situation is that workers responding to a fire might be required to work 24 hours straight – in a physically demanding job. The Union also believes it takes too long to get relief crews in, and that having extra staff in reserve would make a positive difference to the hours employees had to work, and to response times.

The department has been a victim of government budget cuts and risk-taking over many years. The budget restraints have impacted on staff training. And with an ageing workforce, the future will see skilled workers with years of experience retiring and no-one coming through to take their place.



TASMANIA

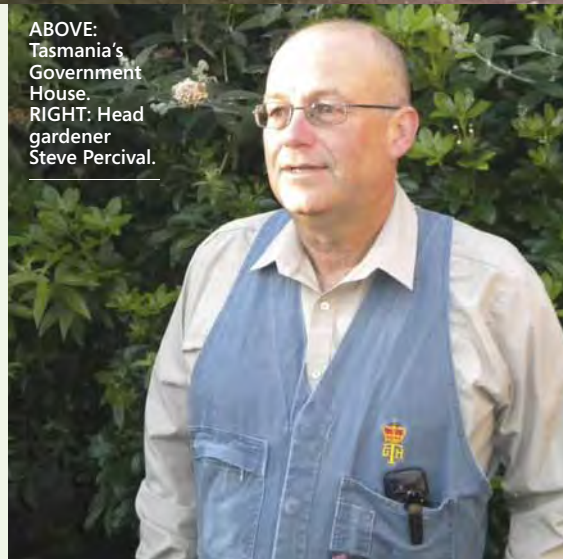
PUBLIC GARDENS AND PARKS & WILDLIFE SERVICE

The Union in the Apple Isle covers horticulturists in the state service who maintain the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens and the gardens at Government House. In Parks & Wildlife, the AWU represents firefighters and seasonal track workers. Overall numbers are small – some 100 statewide, about five per cent of state membership. The AWU traditionally had a lot of public sector coverage in infrastructure and maintenance – now outsourced. As a consequence, union public sector membership has shrunk.

When you go to a national park and walk down a track, the odds are that an AWU Tasmanian Branch member built it. The Branch believes that things are currently okay, but that the service will always require highly trained firefighters. There will also always be a need to maintain the Royal Botanical Gardens and the Governor's Gardens, and for track workers. They're not subject to the cycles that a lot of industries are.

Steve Percival is head gardener at Government House in Hobart. "The main house was completed in 1857. It's an old-fashioned English-style garden of about 35 acres [14ha]. A lot of it is formal gardens and lawn. There are five other gardeners who work here, tending everything from vegetables and cut flowers for use in the house and

ABOVE: Tasmania's Government House. RIGHT: Head gardener Steve Percival.



kitchen through to fine turf – a bowling green. I've been here for 20 years. It's one of those never-ending jobs because gardens are dynamic things, always changing. In winter we do a lot of our infrastructure maintenance: watering systems, landscaping projects, fixing paving and gravel pathways, repairing or putting in stone walls. During the growing season it's full-on. The governor has as many weeds as anyone else! I love the importance of the garden, it's one of the few remaining historic gardens in Australia that's still basically intact, still laid out the way it was in the 1850s. We even have livestock – they introduced cattle from the local prison farm. Being right in the city, to have cows in a paddock only a kilometre from the GPO is a unique thing."



FLY BOYS:
NSW National
Parks & Wildlife
Service.



**National Parks &
Wildlife Service
worker Garth Toner.**

Dene Cullen is a fire crew supervisor. "My crew is currently seven. We respond anywhere between Kununurra and Exmouth, but we even went up to Carnarvon this year. We have a comprehensive winter fuel-reduction burning program that takes in the north of WA in our off-season. I'm based in Harvey. The whole state's been on total fire ban since last November. That means we're on standby three out of every four weeks.

"I've been with the service 17 years. I like the outdoors, the freedom and the camaraderie. On the fire line we could be working up to 36 hours straight. Statistics show that after 18 hours straight you've lost reaction time. We're all aware of it, so we don't operate our vehicles on roads that lead to the fire line. We need bodies on the ground. We've already lost a whole lot of blokes to other industries because we can't maintain a decent wage."

**GREATER NEW SOUTH WALES
NATIONAL PARKS & WILDLIFE, TAFE,
ROADS AND MARITIME SERVICES**

The occupations covered by the AWU in NSW are varied. It covers professional forestry firefighters, National Parks and its flying field officers (aircraft section). For the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS, formerly the RTA), it looks after asphalters and road maintenance and construction crews; for TAFE, the tool stores workers; for schools, farm assistants (where there is a farm attached) and traffic controllers; zoo workers; and Sydney Harbour Bridge workers.

The AWU Greater NSW Branch is pleased that the Union covers such a wide-range of industries, including indoor sport – gyms, 10-pin bowling, state netballers – and even the hair and beauty industry.

In terms of Forest NSW workers, the Branch's concern is that the department is covering more area, with less people. A lot of the work, including cutting firebreaks and road maintenance is contracted out. There was even a push to contract out firefighting. AWU members work in nurseries, which the government is trying to sell off. Members manage the planting and growing of trees and identify which ones to cut down. They inspect areas identifying which trees are seed trees, which are native habitat, which are in riparian zones (near waterways) and which have indigenous importance. All of this is a major contribution to environmental conservation.

Garth Toner is a senior supervisor with the National Parks & Wildlife Service. "We look after all the picnic areas, roads and trail network, and we respond to incidents such as fire, marine mammal stranding, search and rescue, and floods. If it's quiet, we're in catch-up mode. If not, we're responding. I've been part of a team that's gone to America to help with firefighting. We went to Victoria to give them a hand with the fires there. In a bad season, we spend a lot of time away.

"I've been with the service 27 years. I like the camaraderie, the places we visit, being outside, not knowing what to expect each day

– from flying, operating boats and driving plant machinery to cleaning toilets, from pest species management, aerial shooting and baiting to flora management, to firefighting.

"We've been operating on a shoestring for two decades now. We get excited about \$100,000 to do up a reserve. Railways would spend that on a consultant!"

John Scott is a storeman at Mount Druitt TAFE College. "I supply classes with materials, tools, maintain machinery and teach them the way round tools, what hammer to use. I like watching the kids go through their training and seeing them achieve something. They come here with no skills then start to learn. This is just a one-man store. Some of the bigger places have two men and more machinery."

Robert Dunn works for the RMS on a road maintenance crew in the Hawkesbury region. "My major job is asphalt work on all the main arterial roads. I've been doing this for 28 years. The work varies day by day so you're not stuck doing the same thing. We have a multicultural workforce, good blokes, roughly about 30 people. Working outside means I am at the mercy of Mother Nature, experiencing close to zero in winter and high 30s in summer. But to me, it's better than an office or factory."

**NEWCASTLE
FORESTS NSW (NEWCASTLE)**

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Forests NSW worker Greg Murphy. BELOW: RMS worker Robert Dunn.



HOME BASE: Forestry NSW has an important base at Batemans Bay.



“I like the freedom being out in the open air. It’s a good mob of people”

plan. Now in this role I might oversee four or five logging jobs instead of one or two. We cover both plantation and native timber. My grandfather was a log truck driver. I like working outdoors and seeing the beautiful forest.”

PORT KEMBLA

FORESTS NSW (PORT KEMBLA)

The AWU Port Kembla Branch is annoyed that the public isn’t aware of the involvement of forestry employees in bushfire control. Most people only hear about the volunteers, the NSW Rural Fire Service, but most of fire prevention and firefighting is done by state forest employees. The main base is at Batemans Bay, but there are also employees down to the Victorian border. There are 60 employees, plus around 14 seasonals in the firefighting season, depending on the severity of the fires.

Like other states, the department is subjected to constant state government belt-tightening and the Branch is concerned that a wealth of experience will eventually be lost.

The government is bringing in contractors, but the current employees do a lot of training and their safety record is impeccable. They have a lot of knowledge and the great fear is that it won’t be passed on. A new worry is the state government Game Council allowing recreational shooting in state forests. On occasions hunters have been found in the wrong area, so forestry work is confronted with another potential danger.

Greg Murphy works as an operations supervisor. “I supervise the road works – fire trails, log and haulage roads, public roads, bridge construction and normal road maintenance. My main job is to make sure we get the log trucks out to supply all the mills. I’m in the Batemans Bay area, covering from Cobargo to Nowra to Queanbeyan in the west. We rely on reports from the drivers and the public, and we concentrate on the roads we’re going to haul on. I’ve been with Forests for 32 years. I like the freedom, being out in the open air. It’s a good mob of people.”

record in New South Wales, with a long history of union coverage. The blokes who work for Forestry NSW know that sustainability and profitability go hand in hand. Although the actual logging and milling is contracted out, and planting may soon follow suit (whether or not to outsource nurseries is currently being determined as the NSW government trims the public sector), there’s still plenty to do. Forestry workers oversee the contracting, cut and maintain trails and access roads, do wildlife counts, and fight fires.

For the AWU Newcastle Branch, it’s all about forest survival. The Branch recognises that there is plantation timber as well as old-growth forest and that it’s not a simple matter of going in and clear-felling an area. Workers

are trained to know which trees can be cut, which are regeneration trees, which are habitat trees. Members do the tree marking, the indicators and general forest maintenance. The workers also fight fires. As highly trained firefighters, they are also responsible for managing and operating a large fleet of vehicles during fire season as firefighting units in the bush.

Jamie Harris coordinates the contractors. “I make sure the crews have all the right gear and make sure they are logging in the right place. I work anywhere from Urunga railway down to Bulahdelah and out to Walcha. It’s a lot of driving. I’ve been in the logging side of forestry for the past 15 years. I supervised the loggers on the government’s behalf, made sure they did the right thing, followed the rules and regulations and abided by the harvest



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Jimmy Madden, NSW

BRIGHT SPARK: Salisbury mechanic and fabricator welder Ashleigh Bell.



THE FINE ART OF WORK



Known as the city of the arts and the capital of the festival state, Adelaide is also home to some of Australia's major manufacturing plants. It's no easy ride, but sometimes hard work and celebrations can go hand in hand, as Michael Blayney discovered...

AWU members should feel right at home when they walk through the doors of Holden's headquarters in the Adelaide northern suburb of Elizabeth. In the main foyer, visitors are greeted by a shiny 2011 Series II SS-V Commodore Sedan. The car is sprayed a welcoming shade of AWU yellow, a fitting tribute to the many thousands of our members who've pieced together the

national motor car in this Adelaide workplace throughout its 53 year history.

Today, we'll be touring the Holden plant with AWU Delegate Nick Pettina, a man who is helping to shape this shop floor into a typical 2012 manufacturing environment.

"Since 2005, the job's been quite full-on," says Nick, the on-site delegate since 2000. "It's been one challenge after another

with restructuring, and there's a lot of day-to-day work, lots of working parties dealing with the company."

The automotive industry is once again on the front page with Holden currently locked in negotiations with the state and federal governments to ensure the Elizabeth plant's operational future.

On paper, the numbers are bleak. In 2004, production was at an all-time high

Photography: David Hahn



MAIN DRIVE:
Holden
Manufacturing
Operations.



BODY BUILDING: Workers at
the Holden Manufacturing
Operations.

with more than 165,000 cars assembled at Elizabeth. Last year, approximately 90,000 cars idled out the doors. As the Australian dollar continues to rise and exports fall, similar numbers are forecast for 2012.

Understandably, AWU members are nervous. "We hear reports in the paper talking about bailouts and handouts. Our people don't like that sort of language because it implies that the industry is in decline, and we're going to lose our jobs," Nick says. "We want an ongoing commitment, and we're trying to make the government aware that we are a worthwhile investment."

A government report released earlier this year stated that the Elizabeth plant is worth \$1.5 billion annually to the South Australian economy, and closure would lead to the loss of 16,000 jobs, directly or indirectly.

OPPOSITION IDIOCY

While it appears the federal government is preparing to broker a co-investment package, the Coalition is making all the wrong noises. South Australian Liberal Opposition Leader Isobel Redmond recently commented that investing in the automotive industry "tends to be money not necessarily well spent".

On the national stage, Opposition Treasurer Joe Hockey was similarly ambivalent about securing Australian jobs. "If you are in the business of subsidising industries then what you are doing is distorting the market," he told ABC Radio in February.

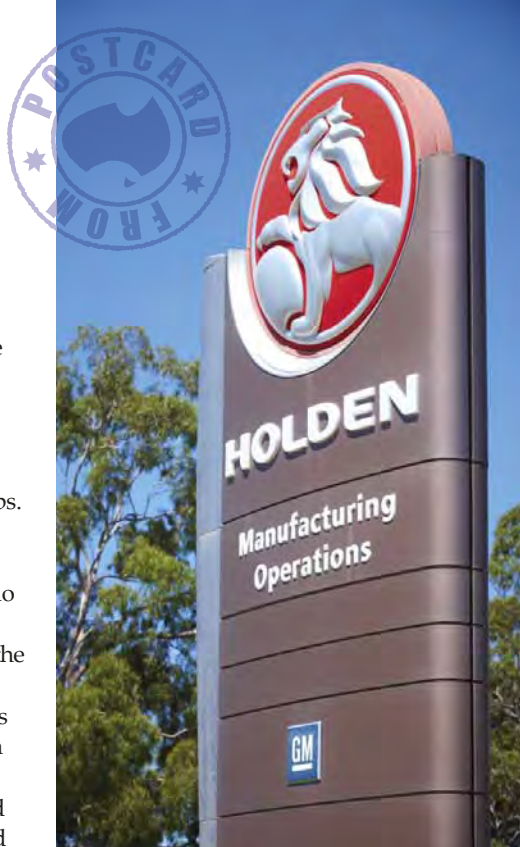
With so many livelihoods on the line, the anti-manufacturing messages trumpeted by the Coalition, both state and federally, is a concern. "This sort of talk has no place in the debate," Nick says. "Manufacturing is a big part of what this country's about, and it underpins a heck of a lot of jobs around the country. Yes, I'm a union person and a Labor man, but if the Liberal Party could put the politics to one side, and focus on the real issues, we'd be a whole lot better off."

Last week, Nick was in Canberra presenting a petition to the federal government on the issue of co-investment in the automotive industry. He returned to Adelaide in a more positive frame of mind.

"Before that trip I wasn't sure what support we were getting, but the plan's there, and it's not far away. Perhaps



THE DRILL: On the job at Holden Manufacturing Operations.



TYRE LESS: Putting it all together at Holden Manufacturing.

there will be some restructuring as we consolidate shifts, but this doesn't mean that the wheels are falling off."

FOOTBALL, MEAT PIES, KANGAROOS AND HOLDEN CARS

We make our way to the Holden shop floor, where wheels are thankfully being securely fastened to vehicles instead of dropping to the ground. On a good day, about 400 cars are manufactured under

this roof. The metal comes in one end as a roll of steel, and roars out the other, ready for the road. In between, panels are punched out and painted, exteriors and interiors are assembled, and engines are lowered into place.

The shed itself is home to one huge production line. Above our heads, Holden models in different states of completion are suspended on rails, looking a bit like cars on a roller-coaster ride without the thrust

“We hear reports in the paper talking about bailouts and handouts. Our people don’t like that sort of language...”

and thrills. Underneath the cars, workers hustle and bustle, performing their designated tasks before the vehicle moves onto the next line in the cycle. There is a frenzy of activity at all workstations.

"I started work here at 17, so it's a big part of my life, it's a big part of everyone's lives," says Nick, one of 2700 workers at Elizabeth. "So much industry in this area depends on Holden. Next time you're looking to buy a new car, remember that you're driving Australian jobs."

With the Holden Elizabeth plant in the rear-view mirror, we high-tail it to our next destination (in a Commodore, of course), the AWU head office in Mawson Lakes, about 12 kilometres north of Adelaide's city centre.

AWU HQ has been located here since 2004. It's handy to the Holden plant, but Branch Secretary Wayne Hanson is at pains to point out that AWU members are scattered all over the state. "No matter where you go, you'll never be centrally situated. One of our regional organisers who retired recently used to cover so much ground that we'd replace his car each year. He would do between 120,000 and 140,000 kilometres in a year. For our people on the ground, the car is their office."

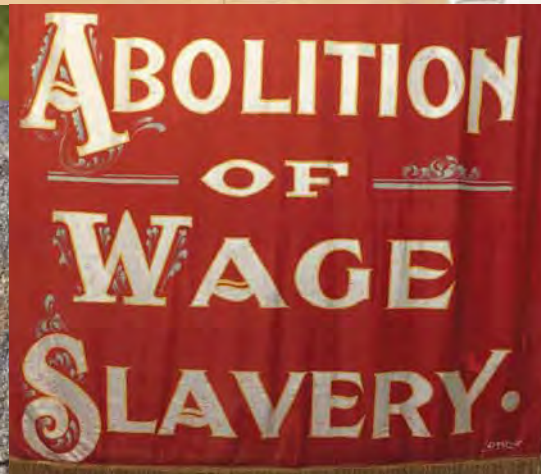
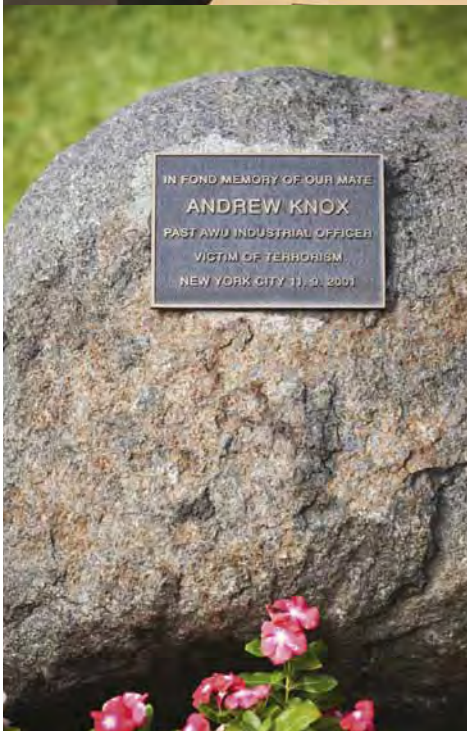
Back on the move again, we drop in on On-Site Delegate John Edwards at the City of Salisbury Operations Centre. The council in Adelaide's northern suburbs employs 150 staff and 95 per cent of them are AWU ticket holders.

THE HEAT IS ON!

Today the temperature is in the high 20s; fairly mild for an Adelaide summer. Back in the heatwave of early 2009, Adelaide sweltered through 13 consecutive days over 33 degrees and six consecutive days over 40. John, who negotiated the latest City of Salisbury EBA that included an entitlement for workers to knock off when the mercury soars above 37.8 degrees, remembers it well.

"We had to stop work for seven or eight days in a row. It can get pretty dangerous if you stay out there too long," John says.

Our next stop is the Exide Technologies manufacturing plant. Exide is one of the largest car battery manufacturers in Australia. The brands Exide and Marshall (which is also made in this Elizabeth facility), are probably the most recognised



AWU SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH: TOP: Branch Secretary Wayne Hanson with his fantastic office team. LEFT: Andrew Knox Memorial – Andrew, a former AWU official, was killed in the World Trade Center terrorist attacks in New York. BELOW LEFT: South Australian Branch Organiser and AWU National Vice President Peter Lamps. BELOW: AWU Senior On-Site Delegate John Edwards.





POWER TRIP: Exide Technologies
AWU On-Site Delegate Les Sweet.



“Next time you’re looking to buy a new car, remember that you’re driving Australian jobs...”



caroma



ON TAP: Caroma operators Kathryn Mudge, Jenna Baldwin and AWU Delegate Claire Conaghty.

batteries used by Australian car drivers.

Trades Delegate Les Sweet has 100 per cent AWU representation on the floor and with an EBA up for renewal, Les is hopeful that management will give workers their fair entitlement this time around in a challenging economic environment for the firm.

“Unfortunately, we’ve been going backwards. Five out of the last six years we haven’t got anything close to the CPI. We used to be comparable to Holden, but now the same position in the trades division here is paid \$200 less. People are leaving and I can understand that. All of us have to put food on the table,” Les says. “Three years ago, when we finalised our last EBA, management was under pressure from the Global Financial Crisis, and they promised to look after us in the next round. We’re entitled to a fair outcome. Over the last three years, effectively we’ve been given a 1.8 per cent average. That’s just not good enough.

“Yes, we’re expecting negotiations to be vigorous, and on past experience it could be a rocky road. Industrial action is always an option. The company has to survive, but we have to exist as well. All we’re asking for is a decent wage.”

The workplace environment is a little more settled at our next stop, Caroma, in the inner Adelaide suburb of Norwood. Here more than 20 staff work the factory floor at any one time, and the latest EBA was finalised

last month with a wage increase of four per cent every year for the next three years.

Not sure where you’ve heard the name Caroma? If you’re reading this article on “the throne”, turn around and the word Caroma may just be staring you in the face!

FEELING FLUSHED

Approximately 3000 Caroma toilets are made here every day. Claire Conaghty is team leader and AWU On-Site Delegate. So, what does she do every day? “We make your dunnies,” she says, with a smile.

Claire has worked at Caroma for five and a half years, one year as the delegate. She’s enjoying the added responsibility. “The delegate job has been a challenge. It’s something new, and the negotiating has been a real eye-opener. They’re a good company to work for, and I enjoy being the middleman between management and the workers.”

Outside of work, Claire took part in the 2012 BUPA Challenge Tour, a cycling event for all-comers preceding the prestigious Tour Down Under cycle race. In her debut effort, Claire completed the undulating 79 kilometres from Mount Pleasant to Tanunda in a respectable three and a half hours.

“The next day I came into work and was on my feet for a whole eight-hour shift,” she says, giving the impression that this was more of an effort than a few hours in the saddle.



CITY OF FESTIVALS

Although Adelaide is often known as the city of churches, South Australia's number plates are proudly stamped "The Festival State". Here's a selection of what's on offer in the state's capital.



ADELAIDE FESTIVAL

Staged since 1960, the Adelaide Festival is rightly considered one of the world's greatest arts festivals. Every two years, Adelaide is transformed into a hub for artists and audiences from

all over the globe, with a feast of theatre, film, dance, opera and more. The next festival will be held in March, 2014.

WOMADELAIDE

Held over four days in March, WOMAdelaide (World of Music, Arts and Dance) pumps out the global beats on a host of outdoor stages in the city's centrally located Botanic Park. Wildly popular every year, it's dancing room only front of stage.

ADELAIDE CABARET FESTIVAL

Life is a cabaret (old chum) every June in Adelaide when local and international stars take to the stage. This year Mary Wilson, a founding member of The Supremes, will star in *Stormy Weather*, a celebration of the life of black American entertainer Lena Horne. Now in its eleventh year, the festival will also feature British comic Lenny Henry.

SCHUTZENFEST

Adelaide is proud of its German heritage, and celebrates accordingly at the annual Schutzenfest (shooting festival) every January. The first South Australian Schutzenfest was staged in 1889, and the festival has grown to include plenty of German folk music and dancing on several stages. Slapping leathery thighs might be your thing, but we're here for the beer.

ADELAIDE SALSA FESTIVAL

The new kid on the block, this festival of fiery Latin music and dancing (not fiery condiments) will celebrate its fifth year next March. Over a few days and nights, local and international performers steam up Adelaide's dance floors.

NATIONAL
FRESH SCARE TACTICS AT BELL BAY

Rio Tinto Aluminium has been exposed for its latest round of scare tactics at its Bell Bay smelter in Tasmania – including fresh threats to workers’ pay and conditions.

In February, Rio Tinto warned employees that their current pay and conditions could be under threat if they continued to support a collective agreement. The company sent letters to employees’ homes suggesting it may be a bad time to move towards collective bargaining. It also engaged Australian rules footballer Alastair Clarkson to address workers on the company’s behalf. Then, during closed-door information sessions, management misled employees on their pay and conditions, one manager going so far as to say that if the company was required to negotiate a collective agreement with the Union, “your salary increases, your bonuses that you get will be on the table”.

AWU National Secretary Paul

Howes said he was not surprised to see Rio Tinto revert to dirty tricks to undermine its employees’ engagement with the Union.

“Despite public statements claiming they support freedom of association, Rio is returning to the same old campaign of fear and intimidation,” Paul said. “Bell Bay employees are the worst paid aluminium workers in the country, and yet their employer is one of the most profitable miners in the world.

“What Rio Tinto is suggesting to their workforce is simply untrue. No worker at Bell Bay will be in a worse position under a collective agreement. That’s a fact.”

Paul said the situation is an injustice that needs to be addressed. With close to 70 per cent support for a union-negotiated collective deal among the smelter’s 558 workers, an application will be lodged with Fair Work Australia.

When AWU Tasmanian Branch representatives met with Rio Tinto



AWU National Secretary Paul Howes at Bell Bay.

management in early March, they were assured the company was in the process of developing a business plan to ensure the long-term viability of the Bell Bay plant. As part of that

strategy, the company is looking at opportunities to reduce input costs and confirmed there is no current plan for closure, reduced production or redundancies.

NATIONAL
PM MEETS WITH ALCOA EMPLOYEES

AWU Alcoa Delegates were pleased to meet with Prime Minister Julia Gillard and Minister for Industry and Innovation Greg Combet after Alcoa announced a review of the company’s operations in Victoria. More than 600 jobs are under threat.

Alcoa announced that its Point Henry, Geelong, operation was “becoming unprofitable” due to the increased Australian dollar value, input costs and a decrease in the price of aluminium.

AWU National Secretary Paul Howes said the Union and aluminium workers had not met the PM with a specific agenda or wish list, but rather to draw the government’s attention to the dire issues affecting the Australian and global aluminium industries.

“The Union is very concerned about the announcement that Alcoa made,” Paul said. “We believe there is a strong and viable future for Australia to make aluminium in Geelong.”

The Prime Minister told the delegation that she believed manufacturing could and would have a strong future in Australia.

She said that the government intended to continue working closely with the manufacturing industry, as well as the Victorian

government, and to have open and regular contact with Alcoa during its five-month review

Greg Combet said that the company needed to find ways to turn the Geelong operation around.

“Alcoa has got to look at what investments it can make to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of their operation,” he said.

Despite Alcoa and the AWU blaming the high Australian dollar for falling profits, federal opposition leader Tony Abbott predictably blamed the carbon tax. Meanwhile, Victorian Coalition Premier Ted Baillieu told Alcoa workers that he was not in a position to guarantee jobs at the plant.



Prime Minister Julia Gillard met AWU Alcoa Delegates regarding dire issues affecting Australia’s aluminium industry.

NATIONAL

SWAN VS THE MINE BOSSES

The feathers certainly flew when Federal Treasurer and Deputy Prime Minister Wayne Swan took on the big mining bosses in a magazine article and then again at an address to the National Press Club in February.

In an essay published in the *Monthly*, the Treasurer expressed concern over the threat to wealth equality in Australia, saying that "if we don't grow together economically, our community will grow apart".

He followed up with a speech to the National Press Club in which he highlighted the risk posed by vested interests, such as the mining companies, who would see the benefits of Australia's resources boom "flow disproportionately to a fortunate few".

"Inequality isn't just unfair – it's inefficient," he said. "It makes no moral sense for the battler to subsidise his boss's private health insurance. It makes no financial sense either."

"While pure equality is obviously not the answer, we do need to combat the types of disparities in opportunity that damage our society. But in recent years, we've seen the emergence of a tiny handful of people... who mobilise their considerable wealth against policies designed to benefit the majority."

The Treasurer accused Clive Palmer,



Deputy Prime Minister Wayne Swan.

Gina Rinehart, Andrew Forrest and other powerful vested interests of using their power and wealth to further their own interests.

"...I welcome the involvement of everyone of good heart in the discussion of public policy whether I agree with them or not. But there has been a perceptible shift in this country over the past few years towards a stronger and stronger influence, being wielded by a smaller and smaller minority, and more and more plainly expressed in their own private interests."

The AWU supports the Treasurer in his pursuit of economic fairness and social justice, and a fair go for all in the distribution of Australia's resources wealth.



Pay equity at last for workers who do a wonderful job.

QUEENSLAND

PAY EQUITY WIN FOR DISABILITY SUPPORT WORKERS

In February, Fair Work Australia handed down its decision on the pay-equity case for social and community sector workers.

The AWU Queensland Branch, along with other unions, made the application to ensure that workers in the disability support sector receive fair pay for the important and difficult tasks they undertake every day.

An important benchmark for the pay-equity case was the wages that AWU members in Disability Services Queensland were able to achieve through their collective strength.

Fair Work Australia has determined that the award wage rates of social and community service workers will increase by 18 to 41 per cent (depending on the award classification level).

These wage increases will be phased in over six years, commencing December 1, 2012 and concluding December 1, 2018.

For workers who are already on enterprise agreements the following will apply:

- If your enterprise agreement pay rate is higher than the new adjusted award rate, you will maintain your higher agreement rate.
- If the new adjusted award rate overtakes your enterprise agreement rate, your pay will be brought into line with the higher award rate.

NATIONAL

HEALTH AND HARMONY

The Australian Workers' Union, along with other unions, is taking part in a campaign to educate workers about their rights under the new harmonised health and safety laws that affect 58 per cent of Australian workers.

The *Speak Up* campaign aims to ensure workers are up to date with the harmonisation process and understand what it means for their work environment.

"Our union has a long and proud history of standing up for the safety of our members at work," AWU National Secretary Paul Howes said. "With our members in most states and territories now affected by these new laws, it is important that we help educate them about their rights through this campaign."

Under the new laws, workers will have enhanced rights to elect health and safety representatives. With rights to stop work and demand improvements where health and safety threats are recognised, these reps will play a crucial role in creating safer workplaces.

Employers that hinder the work of health and safety reps or prevent them from standing up for their workmates where safety is a concern will be breaking the law.

"We have always felt the key to safer workplaces is our health and safety reps," Paul said. "Under these new laws, our reps will have rights to put a stop to work where they see safety concerns. This will make them crucial to improving safety conditions where our members work."

The new health and safety laws came into effect in January across Queensland, NSW, the Northern Territory and the ACT, with Tasmania and South Australia expected to follow later.

Unions, peak industry organisations and governments are expecting to see productivity improvements and a reduction in red tape that will ultimately result in safer workplaces.

The AWU is encouraging members to check out www.safeatwork.org.au for information about common health and safety issues, rights, legislation and news.

QUEENSLAND **RECENT WINS FOR QUEENSLAND AWU MEMBERS**

The AWU Queensland Branch has been successful in a number of issues, resulting in the retrieval of substantial amounts of back pay for members working at Queensland Health (QH).

A number of gardeners were compensated more than \$100,000 in total due to QH's noncompliance with an Award provision. Further claims by AWU members for similar Award breaches also saw substantial back-pay claims met.

The AWU's success in pursuing these claims has also seen thousands of members share more than \$3 million dollars in back pay through a claim for breaches of the "Late-Early Allowance".

The AWU has recently reached an in-principle agreement with QH that will eventuate in further compensation for members in excess of \$2 million dollars for other breach claims.

The successful outcomes are due to the strength and determination of members and the officials working together.

QUEENSLAND **AWU MT ISA STALWART RETIRES**

Long-time AWU delegate Gerry Owen has decided to call it quits as the AWU representative at Xstrata Mt Isa Mines. Gerry joined the AWU in 1968 when he moved to Mt Isa to work in the mines, after emigrating from the UK.

He became a delegate in 1980, and in 1985, he was involved in a major dispute regarding a crib hut at the Hilton mine. The hut was built to house 10 people but had 18 people cribbing in it and there was an exhaust fan running right past it.

Mount Isa Mines said the mine was a separate entity, so other AWU members could not take

industrial action and eventually they had to go back to work after being threatened with big fines

"Sheer bloody mindedness on behalf of the company," Gerry said. "For a problem that could have been fixed for \$10,000, MIM lost more than \$3 million in production."

Gerry likes the town of Mt Isa. "People are conservative in Mt Isa, but they want a union, and the AWU has always serviced the town well.

"The AWU was here when the first bucket of ore was hoisted, and we'll still be here when the last one is."

GREATER NSW **A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY**

The AWU Greater NSW Branch is concerned about the potential impact on national security if Caltex decides to close its refineries in Kurnell, NSW (and also Lytton in Queensland) after the completion of a six-month operations review.

In early March, Caltex announced its review after considerably writing down the value of its refinery assets, sighting the ongoing strength of the Australian dollar as a key factor.

AWU Greater NSW Branch Secretary Russ Collison believes that if Caltex decides to close both

refineries after their review, Australia would no longer have enough refining capacity to meet its defence fuel supply needs in the event of a loss of supply from overseas.

"Without these refineries, in the event of a war or natural disaster, Australia could face a serious shortage in fuel supply," Russ said.

With 800 jobs at risk, the potential closure of Caltex refineries would have a devastating effect on the local community at Kurnell.

Caltex Kurnell employee Graeme Grace said that he couldn't imagine Kurnell without the refinery as a major employer.

"Kurnell would be devastated by the loss of Caltex, the workers and their families would probably have to move elsewhere for work which

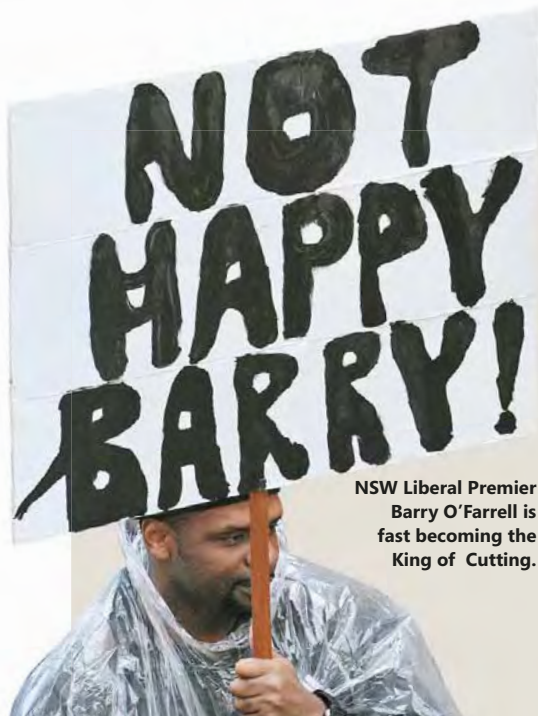
would leave the local economy in tatters," Graeme said.

"We are asking management to meet with our union to discuss the review process so that the workers understand how it will unfold.

"We want the refinery to stay open more than anyone and I think with the right level of cooperation between workers and management that could be achieved."

The AWU has written letters to senior Caltex management requesting meetings to clarify the terms of reference for the review so that the Union can assist in ensuring the future viability of the refineries.

The Union believes it is imperative that any review undertaken is open to input from the workforce and their union.



NSW Liberal Premier Barry O'Farrell is fast becoming the King of Cutting.

GREATER NSW **SERVICE NOT PROFIT**

AWU Greater NSW Branch Secretary Russ Collison has spoken out against the NSW state government's sell-off of public services.

"NSW Liberal/National state government is attempting to either sell, contract-out or downsize various government services, which will eventually cost every resident of NSW," he said. "Short-term financial gain will result in long-term pain for all NSW residents."

The latest attempt by the NSW government is to sell off five Forests NSW Nurseries. The announcement was made without consultation with the AWU and has horrified AWU members working at the nurseries.

These nurseries support the propagation of indigenous and exotic trees and shrubs

including the Lone Pine grown from specially imported stocks from Gallipoli. They support forest operations as well as regional NSW local government and the general public.

The NSW Liberal/National government wants to sell the nurseries with a guaranteed market rental return to the government but with no requirements to maintain wages and conditions for employees.

More than 2000 petitions have been signed by locals and customers to keep the nurseries in state government control. The petitions will be presented to Steve Whan, Shadow Minister for Resources & Primary Industries, who will take up the fight on behalf of the employees and the community.



Former Continental Carbon employees celebrated their win at Fair Work. Far left (in white T-shirt) is Shane Braz and on the far right is Greater NSW Branch Organiser Paul Noack.

GREATER NSW

AWU WIN FOR CARBON BLACK REDUNDANT EMPLOYEES

Workers were given just a couple of weeks' notice when Continental Carbon Australia announced it was closing down after 45 years. The high Aussie dollar; local tyre manufacturers switching to imports and the loss of a major contract with Caltex had made the business unviable.

AWU members not only had to deal with losing their jobs but also the news that the company had decided to outsource the calculation and payment of their redundancies to a third party, which had no idea of the pay structure.

AWU Delegate Shane Braz, whose father Mick was previously a delegate for 20 years at the site, had a great understanding

of the entitlements and was quick to notice discrepancies with the redundancy payments.

"The AWU training courses I attended and the support from past delegates and current AWU officials was so important and gave me the tools and confidence to take on the claim and win," Shane said.

After six weeks of negotiations and a visit to Fair Work Australia, members received their true value of entitlements.

"AWU Officials Paul Noack and Graeme Beard were true ambassadors of the AWU," said Shane. "They gave me all the advice I needed to get the job done right. Without the Union support it would never have happened."

GREATER NSW

AWU EXPANSION IN ORANGE

On February 16, 2011, the AWU opened a new office in Orange. Greater NSW Branch Secretary Russ Collison said, "It is a great day for the union movement as we open our new office facilities in the main CBD."

"This demonstrates that we are a union growing in membership and that the AWU is the main representative of regional workers. The growth in the mining industry has to ensure that employees and the community have their fair share of this newfound wealth."

AWU National Secretary Paul Howes said the development of regional cities was the key to Australia's future.

"The central west of NSW is AWU heartland," Paul said. "Offices like this one in Orange play a critical role for the AWU. It is an easy access point for our members and also provides the platform for us to lobby on behalf of our members. For example, AWU's support for Orange City Council's Macquarie Pipeline proposal for water security, which is essential to the city's future."

GREATER NSW

WHY NOT HAVE FUN?

It's free to enter the AWU AFL/NRL footy tipping competition!

Don't worry that the "festival of the boot" season has already started, you might surprise

yourself and win anyway. Up to a million dollars in cash and prizes are available to be won. Log onto <http://awu.milliondollartipping.com.au/>



Enter the AWU AFL/NRL footy tipping comp!



GREATER NSW

MANUFACTURING DIFFICULTIES

The high Australian dollar coupled with local interest rates, which are high compared to world rates, has created a difficult trading environment for businesses.

Thrown into the mix are some poor management decisions on product mix, sales and the use of contractors, which has resulted in cuts to jobs.

The important lessons learned for many workers is that to have any say in the redundancy process, there must be a strong union presence and an enterprise agreement (EA) that calls for a genuine consultation process.

AWU Greater NSW Branch Secretary Russ Collison said that redundancies and organisational change is always a difficult process.

"Workers must be treated with dignity and respect and not be treated as some type of chattel that managers can dump when they have no further use for you," Russ said.

Australian Workers' Union members are achieving an increased say in organisational restructures by including clauses in the EAs such as organisational change, redundancy process and ongoing consultative committee meetings.

NEWCASTLE **WESTRAC SUCCESS**

For just over two years, the AWU Newcastle Branch has been running a recruitment campaign at Westrac, which supplies and services new and used caterpillar machinery for the construction, mining and forestry markets. The national company has about 18 sites across NSW, employing approximately 800 people.

All employees across the state were employed under Australian workplace agreements (AWAs), until the introduction of the Fair Work Act forced the company to negotiate a state-wide collective agreement.

When negotiations began, there were more than 30 bargaining representatives involved from all sites, most with different views and still

in the mindset of individual arrangements.

AWU members voted against the company offer as they were not satisfied with the wage increases on offer, the penalty rates provided for, or the dispute settling procedure included, but they did not have the numbers and the offer was accepted.

Since then the AWU has been active across most sites, resolving disputes and doing safety inspections. Negotiations are due to begin later this year for a new enterprise agreement and the Union is determined to deliver a better outcome for members this time around.

The AWU now has six delegates at Westrac and 170 financial members employed in the Newcastle area.



Members at Wyong Race Club have had a successful EBA outcome.

NEWCASTLE **UNITY AND STRENGTH AT WYONG RACE CLUB**

AWU members employed as track maintenance staff at Wyong Race club have just finalised their enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) after eight months of negotiations.

The members were involved throughout the process and the positive results of collective bargaining are apparent in their agreement.

Members have negotiated a three-year agreement with four

per cent wage increases per year. All current allowances are attached to the percentage increase. New allowances were negotiated and won. Redundancy provisions were consolidated and increased along with improved conditions written into the agreement.

AWU members at Wyong Race Club are to be congratulated on their involvement and their collective stand.

NEWCASTLE **MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY**

For the Newcastle Branch, 2011 was a hell of a year. We had our strongest growth ever, due to the hard work put in by the officials and delegates.

Good wage and conditional increases were gained through the negotiation of many collective agreements that were completed during tough economic times.

However, December saw the start of changing times with Hydro Aluminium at Kurri Kurri making 46 workers redundant due to the high Australian dollar and falling aluminium prices. Then in January, Hydro announced the closure of one of its three potlines, and the loss of a further 150 direct jobs and more than 40 sub-contractors.

These are terrible outcomes for all, as it weakens the structure of Hydro's business in Australia and it concerns me that worse is to come (read plant closure). We have all seen recent announcements concerning Alcoa's Point Henry Smelter and Rio Tinto's Bell Bay smelter, with big question marks over their ongoing viability. And it just gets worse for the Australian aluminium industry, with Rio's Tomago Smelter announcing that 100 jobs will go through a plant

restructuring over the next 12 months.

Parallel to this, is the viability of our steel/manufacturing businesses to compete due to the high Australian dollar. As optimistic as I try to stay, it's hard going with the ongoing failure to resolve the economic crisis in Europe and the United States.

On February 28, the Branch played host to guests from Canada's United Steel Workers (USW). USW Local 9490 President Marc Maltais and USW official Guy Farrell, travelled to Australia and New Zealand to talk with unions following the lockout of workers at the Alma aluminium smelter, Quebec by Rio Tinto. AWU Tasmanian Branch Secretary Ian Wakefield brought four delegates up from Bell Bay to meet with the USW reps and delegates from Tomago's smelter.

The Canadian smelter workers have been out since January. With three other smelters in the Alma area, they dare not give up, and with the temperature well below freezing, that's what I call doing it tough.

Anyway, its business as usual. The Newcastle Branch has a further 25 plus agreements to negotiate this year, as well as maintaining our efforts in growing the Union. Who said life was easy!

NEWCASTLE **EMPLOYERS IGNORING FWA GUIDANCE**

The AWU Newcastle Branch is concerned that employers are ignoring advice from Fair Work Australia over enterprise agreement disputes.

Historically, parties resolving disputes with the assistance of Newcastle-based tribunal members have engaged with the conciliation process in a spirit of goodwill, and willingly adhered to the recommendations of the tribunal members.

However, in a number of recent disputes, employer parties have disregarded tribunal members' recommendations or opinions favouring the branch.

While parties are not bound to accept the outcomes from conciliation, difficulty arises when the relevant dispute settlement procedure only allows for arbitration by consent, or does not allow for arbitration at all (except in cases where it is otherwise required by legislation to do so).

While this is an issue that may be addressed during the review of the Fair Work Act, in this increasingly hostile industrial climate there is no better argument for ensuring the right of each party to unilaterally trigger arbitration is enshrined in every enterprise agreement.

NEWCASTLE

SAFETY AND PAY ISSUES FOR CASUAL WORKERS

An unusually large amount of construction work is underway in the Hunter region, including new roads, railways, coal loaders and new coal mines. Unfortunately these major projects are not all covered by union collective agreements.

On some sites all workers are paid comparable industry standard rates, but this is the exception. In recent years, the number of labour hire employees and sub-contractors working on projects has sharply increased,

while the numbers employed directly, under union collective agreements, has diminished. The disparity between wages paid to labour hire employees and those paid under a major project union collective agreement has grown to a point where now it can only be described as exploitation.

On the Abigroup Hunter Expressway project, IPA Personnel has approximately 60 employees on site who are paid only marginally above the wage

prescribed by the Building and Construction General On-site award. For five 10-hour shifts, an entry-level labourer earns \$678 less than an equivalent worker paid under the union agreement.

Often casual workers engaged in insecure work are not paid correctly for hours worked and are not provided with the correct personal protective equipment to perform their work safely.

The AWU Newcastle Branch was recently contacted by a worker who had been employed

for four weeks and had not yet been paid, but was reluctant to speak up in case he was seen as a trouble maker and not called for future work.

The recent inquiry into insecure work in Australia is a step in the right direction but in the meantime thousands of workers continue to be exploited while senior executives and project managers enjoy huge salaries and bonuses for delivering projects ahead of schedule and under budget.



LEFT: In-coming Port Kembla Branch Secretary Wayne Phillips.

PORT KEMBLA

CHANGE AT THE TOP

AWU Port Kembla and Southern Highlands Branch Secretary Andy Gillespie has retired from his position.

Andy has been an AWU member for 41 years and National Secretary Paul Howes thanked him for his hard work, dedication and loyalty to the Union since he joined at the age of 18.

"Andy Gillespie has been a pillar of organised labour in this region for more than four decades," Paul said. "The Australian Workers' Union is extremely proud of the continuous service he has given to our members and their families in the Illawarra. And it has been my absolute pleasure to serve alongside

Andy over my time with the AWU. It's rare to come across a man with such dedication and determination to the cause of labour."

Paul said that Bill Ludwig, the Union's National President, often remarked that it is the responsibility of every official to make sure they leave the Union in a stronger position. Andy, Paul said, has done just that.

Port Kembla Assistant Branch Secretary Wayne Phillips has taken over the top job.

"I remember when BlueScope unsuccessfully tried to de-unionise their workplace in 20002," Wayne said. "It was Andy who stuck up for local workers and stopped the company from stripping away their rights. Today, it's largely because of Andy's strong leadership that almost 2500 members have the wages and conditions they deserve at BlueScope."

Andy leaves a proud legacy of industrial achievement in the Illawarra region.

He started work in Port Kembla's Steel Industry in 1965. In 1972, a year after starting work with the Union, Andy became the Assistant Branch Secretary of the then Federated Ironworker's Association (FIA). He was elected Branch Secretary of the Australian Workers' Union Port Kembla Branch in 2001.

Andy can retire happily knowing that the Branch has been left in good hands.

"I know that the staff and officials of the AWU will be sad to see Andy retire, but I'm completely confident the Branch will be in good hands under the leadership of Wayne Phillips," Paul said.

"Wayne has been the AWU Port Kembla Branch Assistant Secretary since 2005 and brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the role."

VICTORIA **HANDS OFF WORKCOVER MR BAILLIEU**

Victorian AWU members are waging war against a move by the state government to loot almost half a billion dollars from WorkCover and channel the money into general revenue.

AWU Victorian Branch Secretary Cesar Melhem described the proposal as "outrageous" and said it was destined to not only jeopardise workers but penalise employers.

"Money paid by employers in WorkCover premiums is for workplace safety, for compensation for injured workers and not to be turned into a tax on employment," Cesar said. "If the Victorian WorkCover Authority is doing its job, and fulfilling its responsibilities to workers, and there is still a surplus, you'd think a Coalition government would give bosses a break and look at reducing premiums."

Cesar said he would push for an iron-clad guarantee from the state opposition that, should the proposal become a reality, a subsequent Labor

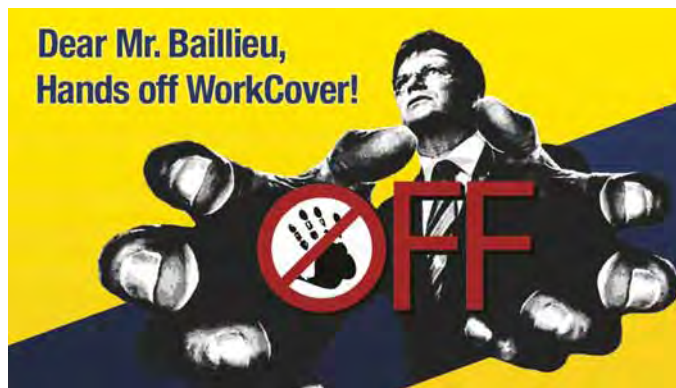
government would immediately undo the damage.

"Victoria went through the devastation former Liberal Premier Jeff Kennett caused by slashing compensation to injured workers and generally running WorkCover down, while also managing to increase premiums," Cesar said. "We simply cannot allow Baillieu to do a Kennett."

The announcement that \$471.5

million would be siphoned from the Victorian WorkCover Authority over four years was buried in mini-budget papers released in the lead-up to Christmas last year. It received minimal media coverage, and looked as if it would be quietly slipped into being with legislation introduced in the first sitting week in February, but that didn't happen.

Legislation was introduced,



eventually, on March 13 and was due to be debated before Easter.

The Victorian Branch swung into action in January with an online and a hardcopy petition to Premier Ted Baillieu. Every online petition signature generates an email to the premier.

All AWU members in the state received a letter outlining the government plan, as did state MPs, major employers and business groups.

"Our members have responded to the call and signed and distributed petitions, talked to local media and their MPs," Cesar said. "This is in contrast to the business groups, the people who are supposed to be representing their employer members, who privately tell me they are worried about the idea, but publicly continue to sit on their hands."

The Union will continue to push for improved WorkCover and WorkSafe standards, including more inspectors in the field, and a commitment to continuing research into best practice.

"This money was intended for workers' benefit, and that's what it must be used for," Cesar said.



VICTORIA **PUBLIC SECTOR MEMBERS STANDING UP**

AWU public sector members in Victoria are facing a barrage of cost-cutting, which promises to jeopardise the security of the public estate, and future fire safety.

AWU Victorian Public Sector Co-ordinator Sam Beechey said negotiations, ongoing since last June, for a new enterprise agreement (EA) for Parks Victoria members had hit an impasse.

"The state government won't move on its 2.5 per cent ceiling on increases in the public sector, but at the eleventh hour introduced proposed measures that would see many of our members get less money from a new EA than they are currently getting," Sam said.

"This is hardly the action of a government that values its workers, or is genuine in its

desire to settle the agreement."

Protected action was taken over the Australia Day weekend with members refusing to open gates at major parks at selected times. Protest lines were set up but no attempt was made to stop management from opening the facilities.

"This was action taken to let the public know what the government is up to, without

ruining the plans of those wanting to celebrate Australia Day, an occasion that has come to stand for the national ethic of a fair go all round," Sam said.

"These people are custodians of the parks and are the public face of them. They are also the people who are called in when there is a crisis, whether that be fire, or flood, or a lost child. They deserve a little respect."


Victorian Liberal Premier Ted Ballieu's inaction could lead to catastrophe.

VICTORIA **REDUNDANCY FEEDBACK WANTED**

The AWU Victorian Branch has started a program to check on members who have been made redundant.

Currently, members who took redundancy packages from BlueScope at Westernport last year are being surveyed to see how they are progressing.

The Branch is keen to hear from other members who have accepted a redundancy package from any organisation.

The information gathered will be kept confidential and will be used to help form a picture of what is needed to help those who are facing redundancy.

Contact Victorian Communications Manager Mary McNamara on mary.mcnamara@awu.net.au or write to her at Australian Workers' Union, 685 Spencer St, West Melbourne 3003.

VICTORIA

WE CAN'T AFFORD LESS FIRE FIGHTERS

The Bushfires Royal Commission came up with 67 recommendations to help Victoria guard against future fires of the magnitude of the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires.

But Premier Ted Ballieu has failed to move on them, despite his promise as opposition leader that he would adopt the recommendations "lock, stock

and barrel" if he was premier.

AWU Lead Organiser John-Paul Blandthorne, who is heading the Department of Sustainability & Environment (DSE) negotiations for a new enterprise agreement, said the fire fighting resources of the DSE and Parks Victoria were dwindling along with worker numbers.

"We are committed as a

union, and as Victorians to see that this state is protected as it should be, and that our members are not endangered in the process," John-Paul said.

"We know that fuel reduction is one of the most powerful weapons in our arsenal when it comes to preventing another catastrophe, and the people are just not there to do it safely."

VICTORIA

VICTORIA IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Victorian industry has been in the spotlight with a series of announcements reflecting the stress caused locally by the high Australian dollar, but while some employers are feeling the heat, others are quietly progressing.

AWU Victorian Branch Secretary Cesar Melhem said that while the bad news garnered headlines, many businesses were quietly doing well. "Every time a member loses a job, or their job is threatened, it is a very serious matter, but on the upside we are seeing steady gains in some areas," Cesar said.

"We are working hard to minimise losses where there is so-called down-sizing, and to contribute to reviews of operations that could have unfavourable outcomes."

The year started with the news O-I Glass would close one of its three furnaces in suburban Spotswood, with 70 voluntary redundancies announced.

"There's been a glass business at that site since 1872, so it's a sad

state of affairs to see it downgraded, but the outcome for our members is being carefully negotiated to see they have the best possible departure packages," Cesar said.

It was the news that Alcoa's Point Henry operation was under review that caused the biggest shock waves of the New Year. About 500 of the 600 workers at the plant are AWU members.

"I have to say that our members at Point Henry have shown the rest of us what solidarity is all about. From the outset they came together, sought information, discussed alternatives and voiced their opinions responsibly and effectively across a range of media," Cesar said.

AWU delegates Brett Noonan, Damian Young and Peter Beaton flew to Canberra with Cesar and AWU National Secretary Paul Howes to explain to Prime Minister Julia Gillard what a closure at Point Henry would mean. State Opposition Leader Daniel Andrews



2012 started with O-I Glass employees being told of redundancies.

was also part of that delegation.

"Our members were fantastic," said Alcoa Site Delegate Brett Noonan. "A lot of people went right outside their comfort zone because everyone knew we had to get people to listen. Some people even let reporters and camera crews into their homes so they could really see what it is all about."

The company has said it won't make any decisions until June, but the commitment from the federal government to work with Alcoa, the state government and unions towards saving those 600 jobs

provided a glimmer of light at the end of the tunnel.

Just to top off a difficult start to the year, Qantas is reviewing its three heavy maintenance facilities – two in Victoria and one in Queensland – with a view to closing one.

"This is not the first time we have faced challenges, and it won't be the last," said Cesar. "The important thing is that we continue to fight for our members, and that we are experienced campaigners who are going to throw everything we have at saving Victorian jobs."

VICTORIA

PSN WORKERS WIN RIGHT TO STRIKE!

Victorian Legal Officer Lee Buntman defeated a stop order application to prevent protected industrial action by a group of Bass Strait workers.

Lee argued to Fair Work Australia (FWA) that the AWU had properly notified Wood Group PSN of the intended strike action, and

that the action was protected.

Wood Group PSN claimed that a notice of seven consecutive 24-hour stoppages was not within the bounds of protected industrial action, saying it was effectively a seven-day stoppage.

Members voted up an "unlimited number of strikes for the duration

of 24 hours". Single stoppages of 24 hours had been taken on two separate occasions within the 30-day limit of the ballot being declared. A seven-day stoppage, which was included in the ballot, had not been taken within the limit.

FWA accepted that Wood Group PSN's argument would result

in a situation where consecutive or rolling stoppages could never be taken, even if consecutive or rolling stoppages were contemplated in the original ballot by the phrase "unlimited number".

AWU Organiser Terry Lee said it was an important win for the branch and future protected action.



AWU Victorian Branch Growth Team.

VICTORIA

GROWTH TEAM KICKING GOALS

Every week, the Victorian Branch has more members than the week before, thanks to the Growth Team.

Team Leader and Victorian Vice President Ben Davis said growth organisers were being met with enthusiasm, particularly in manufacturing.

"We're finding that workers in shops that have never been unionised are approaching us," Ben said. "They want to be part of something bigger, and see the AWU as a means of having safer workplaces, better wages and better conditions."

Extrusions Australia in Laverton was totally non-unionised 12 months ago, but AWU members recently signed a majority support petition for the site, and Ben says members are looking forward to their first union-negotiated enterprise agreement.

TASMANIA

LIFELINE FOR MANUFACTURING

The AWU Tasmanian Branch recently called on the federal government to support Tasmanian manufacturers by expanding the Tasmanian Freight Equalisation Scheme (TFES) to include international exports.

The TFES was introduced to help Tasmanian businesses, which have no access to national road and rail networks, compete on a level playing ground.

When the scheme was introduced, Tasmania was serviced by a direct international shipping line. However, the island state no

longer has a direct international shipping line for containers, meaning Tasmanian exporters now have to ship their products via Melbourne.

AWU Tasmanian Branch Secretary Ian Wakefield said the rationale for excluding international exports from the TFES no longer applied.

"This is about throwing Tasmanian manufacturers a lifeline," Ian said. "We think it's time for the federal government to expand the TFES to include support for Tasmanian companies that export internationally."

RIGHT: AWU Tasmanian Branch Secretary Ian Wakefield.

longer has a direct international shipping line was driving up the cost for Tasmanian manufacturers to reach international markets, thereby making them less competitive.

He said they were already feeling the pressure of the high Australian dollar and could not afford to be set back any further.

"The Union has been working closely with Minister for Economic Development David O'Byrne to examine how we can assist local managers when it comes to their freight competitiveness," Ian said. "The minister has been



examining the economic situation manufacturers face and balancing that with steps both the state and federal government can take to support Tasmanian industry."



A worker at the Savage River Mine.

TASMANIA

SAVAGE RIVER MINE LEVELS OUT

The AWU Tasmanian Branch has successfully rectified issues with the classification structure for workers in the open pit operation at Grange Resources Savage River operations.

The issue concerned the interpretation of skills required to achieve advancement through the classification structure, which was frustrating members due to the lack of clarity around how they could improve their skills and advance through the classification structure

The Union disputed the company's interpretation of the classification structure and, after exhausting any potential for resolution at the site level, proceeded to Fair Work Australia (FWA) to rectify the dispute.

As a result of the Union's FWA application, Grange Resources offered a new interpretation of the classification structure, and AWU members resoundingly accepted the offer.

TASMANIA

EBA DELIVERS FOR MMG MINERS

AWU members involved in underground mining and maintenance at MMG Rosebery have secured improved conditions in a new three-year enterprise agreement.

The EBA provides for the introduction of an incentive scheme that has the capacity to grant bonuses of up to 10 per cent of an employee's salary, in addition to annual wage increases.

Improved redundancy entitlements, totalling an additional 10 weeks, were also achieved. Members voted 96 per cent in favour of the deal.

AWU Delegates Mal Jago, Paul Harding, Graham Cowan and Peter Markham tirelessly assisted AWU officials throughout the negotiations, and members should be proud of their delegates' efforts.

TASMANIA

UNION STANDS FIRM FOR MES AND MANCALA

Recently Bass Metals, the owner of the Hellyer Mine and Mill, announced an amended mining plan and an anticipated early conclusion to mining and milling activity.

AWU members working for two contracting companies on site, Mancala and MES, were left uncertain about their future as these companies attempted to deal with the difficulties that lead to the announcement.

At MES, the company and the Union had different interpretations of the redundancy provisions of their enterprise agreement. The matter could not be resolved in direct discussions with the company, so the Union referred the matter to Fair Work Australia.

As a result, MES has agreed to recognise all continuous service of its employees, and the Union is validating with members their start date with MES, to ensure the correct redundancy entitlements will be paid if operations are wound up.

At both MES and Mancala, the AWU is continuing to push for retention bonuses to be paid to members to ensure that those who decide to stay in employment with these companies until the end of operations, are suitably rewarded for their loyalty.

QANTAS DELEGATE

JASON FREUDENREICH

Being a toolcrib operator and AWU delegate for Qantas keeps me on my toes. A toolcrib operator looks after all the tooling used by the aircraft maintenance engineers, so we have to be on the ball. And there is always something going on that needs sorting out for our members.

I've been in this role, based at the international airport in Sydney, for three years. I spent my first seven years at Qantas in the fabric area, changing the seat covers on the aircraft. Prior to that, I worked as a cable technician for Telstra.

I was persuaded to become a union delegate after we went through an enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA). My pay was meant to increase according to the EBA but it didn't, so I started asking questions.

One of the Union guys said to me "why don't you become a delegate?" and I said "nah". But I kept asking the questions, and he kept suggesting I become a delegate, and finally I agreed.

It turned out that workers in the fabric area were actually covered by a different EBA, which wasn't as good as the one we thought we were under. At that time, the AWU wasn't party to that better agreement.

By the time all this was resolved, the EBA we were covered by was nearly

finalised. It contained some clauses that concerned me, and it was voted down.

The AWU was then able to become party to the better agreement. We tightened up the clauses of concern and, after seeing what we were doing for them, pretty much everybody joined the AWU.

At the moment we're in discussions about what's going to happen with the heavy aircraft maintenance operations in Brisbane and Victoria. There are 25 "voluntary" redundancies going and we are keeping an eye on things to make sure it doesn't become a head-culling exercise.

I grew up in the Sydney beachside suburb of Maroubra. My mother was born in Australia, but my father, a retired pastry chef, is from a town in northern Germany called Lubeck. That's where my surname comes from. None of my mates could pronounce Freudenreich, so I got the nickname "Fruity".

I have an older brother who also works at Qantas. I'm 37 and single with no kids – so single girls reading this take note!

I'm into horse racing and I'm part-owner of a thoroughbred mare called Luckily.



I always went to the Easter yearling sales in Sydney. One day a friend went to the weanling sales and gave me a call to say they were going cheap. The plan was to "pinhook" the mare (buy to resell later at a profit), and we put her in the Magic Millions sales the following year. She didn't quite make the reserve, and as we had become attached to her, we decide to race her.

After a lot of conversation about naming her, something was said along the lines of "it might be that 'luckily' we didn't sell her" hoping she may be a good racehorse. The name was available and that was it. Her racing career didn't end quite as luckily as we'd hoped. After winning three races in Queensland, she had to be retired because of a leg tendon injury. But now we're thinking we might breed from her. Hopefully, that will turn out luckily!

“At the moment we’re in discussions about what’s going to happen with the heavy aircraft maintenance operations.”



Jason has a passionate interest in horse racing. LEFT: Qantas workers on the job.

PORT KEMBLA BRANCH SECRETARY

WAYNE PHILLIPS

There was no question that I would be a trade unionist from early on. My father and grandfather worked on the waterfront at Port Kembla and were union men. Becoming involved in the union was a natural progression.

I was elected as a delegate with the Metal Workers Union when I was a fourth-year apprentice boilermaker at a small firm in Unanderra, NSW. I spent 15 years with that union, and have now been with the AWU Port Kembla Branch for almost seven years.

In 1978, I went to work at the Port Kembla Steelworks, and was elected as a shop steward for my department after it became clear that no one wanted to stand up and take the boss on.

After being retrenched in 1982, along with hundreds of others, I worked as an acting organiser with the AMWU organising companies in the construction industry. When it was time for me to go back on the tools, I found it extremely difficult to get a job. I believe this was as a direct result of my actions against

numerous employers as an organiser.

I finally secured a job with the Maritime Services Board at the Port Kembla coal terminal. I was elected as the delegate within the maintenance department. I also worked as an official with the union and then became an elected organiser.

As a young delegate, one of my first victories was to get the NSW government to put more trains on the Port Kembla line so that workers were not missing the train due to overcrowding after a hard day's work. That gave me a sense of what can be achieved if workers stick together.

I have always been a bit of a larrikin and I like to joke around. However, I take work issues seriously. I have always questioned things if they don't seem fair. I don't like people being screwed and I will speak up for myself and others.

Even when I was at school, I let the teachers know if I thought things were wrong. I went to Berkeley High School, near Wollongong, which is where I met my wife, Cherylyn. We were high school sweethearts and we've now been married for 35 years, so I must be doing something right.

Cherylyn is a great listener, and my

“I never step back and have always questioned things if they don't seem fair. I don't like people being screwed...”

LEFT: AWU Port Kembla Branch's new Secretary, Wayne Phillips

RIGHT: Port Kembla Steelworks at night.



Wayne chills out by riding a motorbike.

best mate. I'm very lucky. We have four kids, two boys and two girls, and seven grand kids.

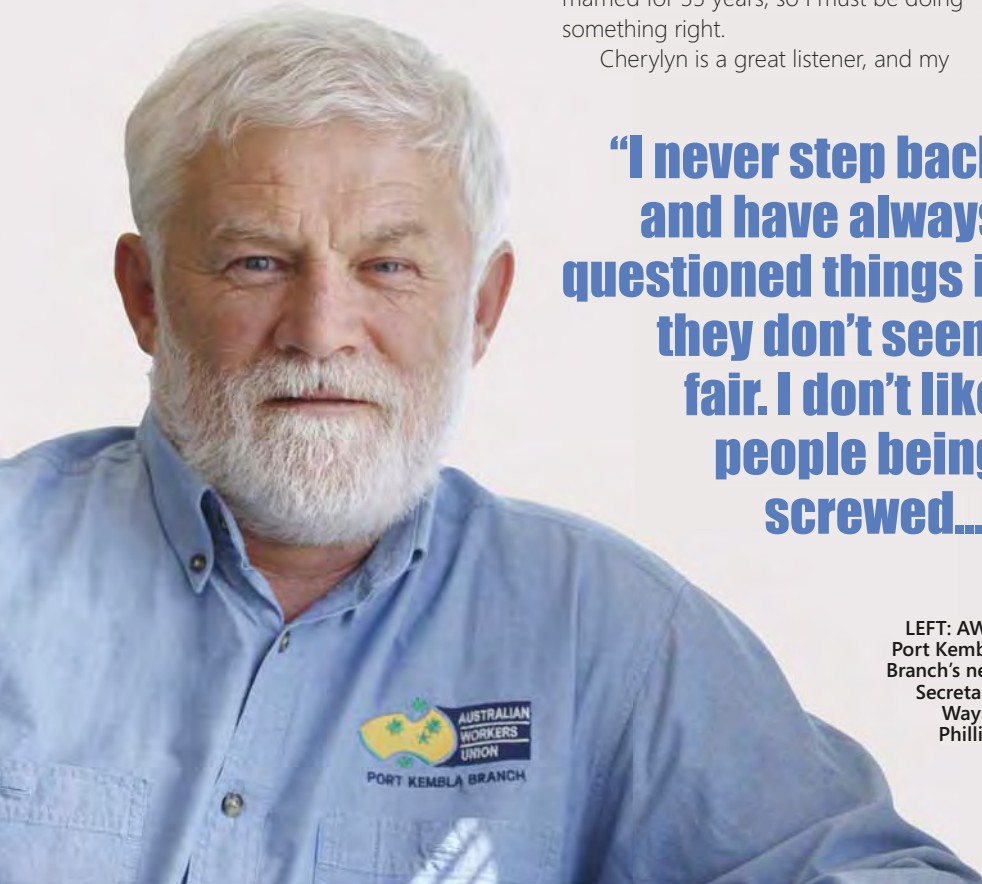
Our oldest son is an assistant manager at Woolworths and he is, I'm happy to say, still a union member. My second son has followed in my footsteps as a boilermaker.

In my spare time, I love to hang out with my family, especially the grandchildren. I also love to do bit of beach fishing, and I'm a motorbike rider and a member of the Ulysses Club (a motorcycle club for mature riders established in 1983).

Just when I was thinking about leaving the AMWU, AWU Port Kembla Branch Secretary Andy Gillespie offered me a job. I was appointed an officer and later elected Assistant Branch Secretary.

After 41 years with the Branch, Andy is now retiring and I have been given the honour of leading the branch as Secretary.

I hope I can do as well as previous branch secretaries. The Port Kembla Branch has a proud history of rank-and-file participation. I want to expand this membership involvement, and I am confident that with my current team we will continue to be a part of proud and progressive union.



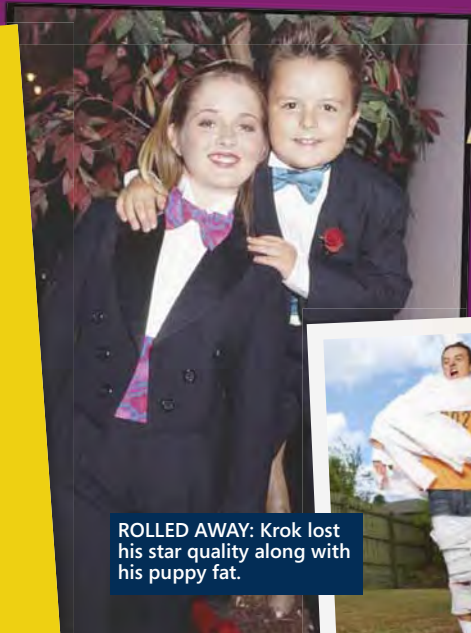
OH YEAH, I REMEMBER...

For every celebrity who forges a successful career in the limelight, there are hundreds who have their moment in the sun and then fade away. From former superstars to everyday individuals clutching onto their 15 minutes of fame, Gavin Dennett discovers what some of yesterday's celebs are doing now

JON ENGLISH

FAMOUS FOR... Just about every Australian musical to hit the stage. After emigrating to Australia from England in the early 1960s, Jon English forged a successful career as an actor and musician, recording albums and featuring on the stage and television. He starred in large musical productions including *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Rasputin* and *The Pirates of Penzance*. He also has an extensive list of TV credits, including 101 episodes of the sitcom *All Together Now*. In the last decade, English's presence in the limelight has diminished, however the 62 year old still performs in theatre and tours with *The Rock Show*, a '60s and '70s music revue.

WILD MAN: As well as performing, English is now a Tasmanian Devil Ambassador.



ROLLED AWAY: Krok lost his star quality along with his puppy fat.



MATTHEW KROK

FAMOUS FOR... Being "the chubby kid from *Hey Dad...!*" and Sorbent commercials. Krok's acting career failed to take flight after the long-running Aussie sitcom ended in 1994. Roles in kids' films *Paws* and *Joey* and a cameo in *All Saints* hardly made the grade and the actor quit the industry in 2001 to focus on door knocking as part of a Mormon missionary, and studying engineering at university in Sydney.

BARBARA FARRELL

FAMOUS FOR... Conveniently carrying around a stick of chalk as Mrs Marsh in the Colgate commercials from 1976-1991. A teacher in the Colgate commercials, Farrell also headed the classroom in real life, returning to genuine chalk duties after her role as Mrs Marsh came to an end in 1991. Retired and living in Noosa, Queensland, the iconic Aussie has battled serious health problems in recent years and is suffering from lung cancer.

CHALK IT UP: Farrell taught a generation of kids about strong teeth.



BUM-DANCING QUEEN: Fedele made the most of her time in the spotlight.

BRUCE SAMAZAN

FAMOUS FOR... Starring in *Neighbours*, *Home and Away* and *E Street* in the 1990s and the horrific rap single "One of a Kind".

After appearing in three of Australia's most iconic television shows, Samazan was one of the biggest stars on the box in the 1990s. But rather than follow the path of Aussie soap actors into English pantomimes, the 1992 Silver Logie winner submitted a bogus resume to Century 21 Realty and settled for Saturday morning open houses as a real estate agent in Helensburgh, near Wollongong. He is now based in Noosa, Queensland.

GET REAL: Samazan swapped the small screen for home sales.



SARA-MARIE FEDELE

FAMOUS FOR... The "bum dance" in Australia's first season of *Big Brother*.

Voted the most popular *Big Brother* contestant in the show's history in Australia, Fedele rode her fame for all it was worth after exiting the show in 2001. A cheesy CD single, a return to the reality show house on *Celebrity Big Brother* and a spot on *Totally Wild* followed before her star began to fade and she settled for jobs in retail and childcare. Fedele, now 33, was last heard from working as a plus-size model for the BGM Models in 2010.



HALL OF INFAMY!

Some people are famous for good reason, while some people are famous simply for being famous. But there are others whose deeds have made them infamous. Here are some worthy of remembrance:

MONICA LEWINSKY

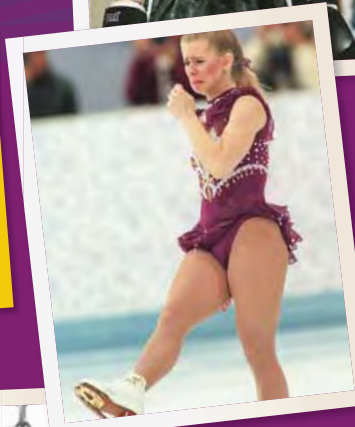
FAMOUS FOR... An alleged illicit affair with Bill Clinton that led to a White House sex scandal and impeachment of the former US President in 1998. Following her liaisons with Clinton in the Oval Office between 1995 and 1997, Lewinsky found herself in the middle of a worldwide scandal, and the subject of taunts and jokes. After initially shying away from media attention and accusing the former US President of lying to a grand jury, the former intern eventually cashed in on her notoriety, selling a line of handbags, fronting a Jenny Craig campaign and hosting a television dating show. Lewinsky eventually moved to London to return to university.

BAD SPORT: Harding tried her fists at boxing after being banned from skating.



TONYA HARDING

FAMOUS FOR... Conspiring to assault rival Nancy Kerrigan before the 1994 US Figure Skating Championships. Already a troubled individual throughout her figure skating career, the Olympian gained world notoriety following her role in the attempt to break the leg of her biggest rival. After receiving three years' probation, Harding was banned for life from skating. She turned to music and professional boxing, but her lack of success was punctuated by run-ins with police and an infamous sex tape.



SOME PARTY: child-star Bonaduce found growing up was hard to do.

DANNY BONADUCE

FAMOUS FOR... Playing a wisecracking kid called Danny on early-1970s sitcom *The Partridge Family*. Bonaduce desperately tried to hold onto his place in the spotlight as he transformed from innocent kid to Hollywood wild man. He nabbed a few acting gigs in the late 1970s, had some success on radio, and has tried boxing, wrestling and reality TV, but sadly the 52 year old has become best known for his wild partying, drug abuse, repeated arrests and homelessness.

RUSSIAN PET: a bikini-clad Gasinskaya made quite a splash when she sought asylum.



THAT WOMAN: Lewinsky shot to fame for all the wrong reasons.



LILLIAN GASINSKAYA

FAMOUS FOR... Jumping overboard from a Russian cruise ship into Sydney Harbour to seek political asylum in 1979. The Russian bombshell made Australian headlines in 1979 when she squeezed through a porthole in the cruise ship she was working on and plunged into Sydney Harbour. When she emerged wearing nothing but a red bikini, she sought asylum and captured the public imagination. After gaining her visa, she celebrated by posing in the buff for *Australian Penthouse*. She vanished from the public eye after marrying a property developer.

JONNY FAIRPLAY

FAMOUS FOR... Concocting a story about his dead grandma as a tactical ploy on *Survivor: Pearl Islands*. Universally hated – particularly by host Jeff Probst – for his dirty tricks on the reality show in 2003, the former art consultant has been revelling in his notoriety ever since. Jonny Fairplay – real name Jon Dalton – returned for the fans-versus-favourites *Survivor: Micronesia*, but has spent most of the last decade working in the ring as a professional wrestler.



WRESTLING WITH THE TRUTH: Fairplay enjoys notoriety.

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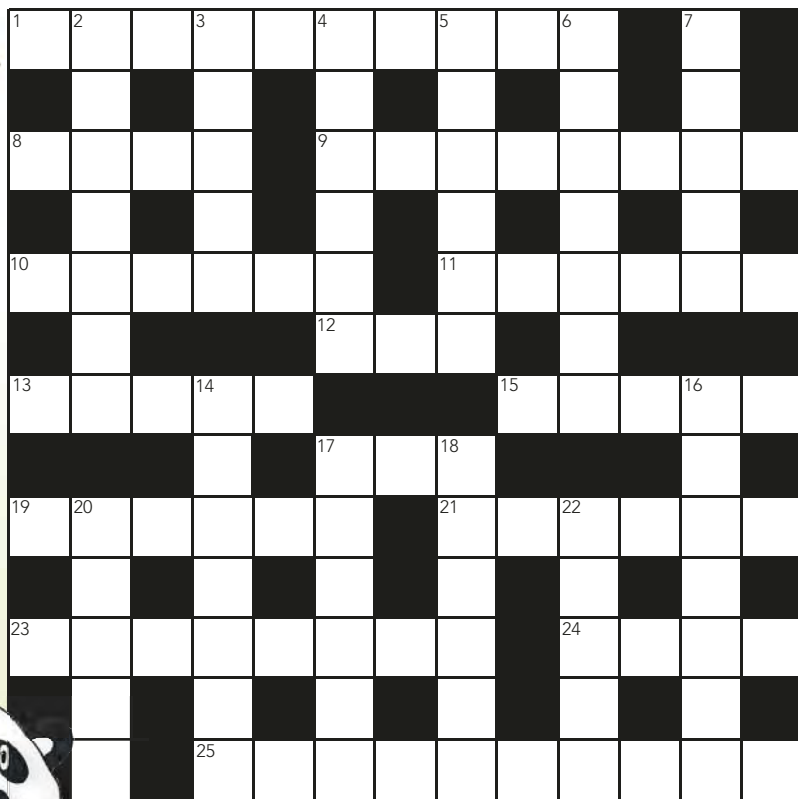
CROSSWORDS

Bindi & Ringer love puzzles and they love words, too. So they'd like you to have a go at their crosswords! They have put together two. One for big kids and one for tiny tots. So grab a pencil (and a rubber) and get stuck into them. Remember to ask Mum or Dad for help if you get stuck. All the answers are at the bottom of the page – but no peeking!

BIG KIDS' CROSSWORD

ACROSS:

- 1 Laughing Australian bird (10)
- 8 Small swelling or boil on the eyelid (4)
- 9 Animal and plant environments (8)
- 10 Baby cat (6)
- 11 When you get bitten by a mosquito, it ----- (6)
- 12 Similar to a spot (3)
- 13 When you get on the scales, you ----- yourself (5)
- 15 Where surfers go to ride waves (5)
- 17 Whales live in the --- (3)
- 19 Renew/renovate (6)
- 21 Sport played by kicking a round ball (6)
- 23 Traditional Indian dish ----- chicken (8)
- 24 I climbed ---- my nice warm bed (4)
- 25 Signatures of famous people (10)



DOWN:

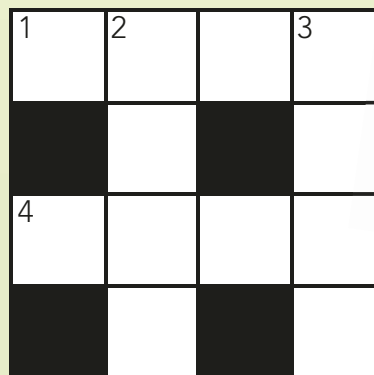
- 2 If you are not inside, you are ----- (7)
- 3 The boy ----- down to tie his shoe lace (5)
- 4 Opposite to in front (6)
- 5 Animal we often call a "bunny" (6)
- 6 Item, or a story in a magazine or newspaper (7)
- 7 100 centimetres equals one ----- (5)
- 14 Grandpa's wife (7)
- 16 Very fast spotted cat that lives in Africa (7)
- 17 Green veggie, brussels ----- (6)
- 18 Requesting (6)
- 20 Electronic mail (5)
- 22 Country where giant pandas live (5)



TINY TOTS' CROSSWORD

ACROSS:

- 1 Twinkle, Twinkle Little ---- (4)
- 4 You see with them (4)



DOWN:

- 2 Fun things to play with (4)
- 3 Flower that smells good and has thorns (4)

BIRTHDAY CLUB

Send your name, address and birthday, along with your Mum or Dad's union membership number, to *The Australian Worker*, ACP Magazines, Level 14, 66-68 Goulburn Street, Sydney 2000 and when your birthday comes around, you'll receive a surprise!

EDITED & ILLUSTRATED: Melissa Martin

ANSWERS BIG KIDS' CROSSWORD Across: 1. Kookaburra; 8. Stye; 9. Habitat; 10. Kitten; 11. Itches; 12. Dot; 13. Weigh; 15. Beach; 17. Sea; 19. Revamp; 21. Soccer; 23. Tandoo; 24. Into; 25. Autographs. **Down:** 2. Outside; 3. Kneel; 4. Behind; 5. Rabbit; 6. Article; 7. Metre; 14. Grandma; 16. Cheeta; 17. Sprout; 18. Asking; 20. Email; 22. China.

TINY TOTS' CROSSWORD Across: 1. Star; 4. Eyes. **Down:** 2. Toys; 3. Rose.

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