



Southern Queensland Branch News

18th March 2010

WORKERS COMPENSATION

The Branch has attended meetings facilitated by the QCU along with other Queensland Unions. The Government has distributed a discussion paper regarding proposed changes to Work Cover. According to the Queensland Government the current scheme has problems with reserve funding because of the global financial crisis.

Two of the predominant issues raised by the discussion paper limits Injured Workers access to common law relief once the statutory component of the claim has subsided and the worker is deemed as stationary and stable therefore a % of permanent impairment is established. Changes to the step down and level of compensation paid to an injured worker whilst the worker is incapacitated. Of course the proposal is not to lift the benefits paid, it is to reduce them meaning "cost savings" to Work Cover.

Members are able to view the discussion paper at the QCU website www.qcu.asn.au go to left hand side under My documents – *Review of Workers Compensation Scheme*.

What is of most concern to Unions and workers is that we are once again expected to bear the brunt of the Global Financial Crisis, a collapse of the world economy that can only be attributed to the decisions of major corporations. (An example of this can be seen on our website, predicated around the financial woes of DP World).

Affiliates at the most recent meeting Monday 15th March, raised the following concerns:

- The step-down rates being changed, would bring substantial hardship to some workers who have an expectation of deriving a certain income if they had not sustained a work related injury (this would be extremely detrimental in some of the lower paid areas e.g. hospitality.)
- Limiting access to common law: Real concerns were made by a number of attendees, in that in a myriad of circumstances common law is the only viable option available to injured workers, in the main because employers throw them on the industrial scrap heap if they cannot be returned to the duties prior to sustaining a work place injury.
- Concerns that more focus should be placed on circumvention of injuries in the first place, with a more refined relationship between WPHSQ & Work Cover e.g. a workplace that has a record of a number of work related injuries should be subject to a stringent inspection regime of WPHSQ.
- More appropriate compliance associated with the paying of premiums by some employers.
- More focus on appropriate rehabilitation and return to work inclusive of compliance mechanisms being established to monitor employers who provide their RTW Policy to Q-COMP but in real terms their policies are in name only and don't provide an injured worker with any meaningful tasks of focused re-training.

Members will be able to ascertain from the information above, that the issue of a viable Queensland workers compensation scheme is under attack, there is no doubt that other stakeholders (employers) will be in complete opposition to the cost of premiums. More information will be provided to members in future editions of the Branch News.

INDUSTRIAL ROUND UP

Deputy Branch Secretary Trevor Munday, in conjunction with National Office and delegates involved in ASP Enterprise Agreement are currently in Melbourne (16th and 17th March) reviewing processes of the Agreement.

Then Trevor will be attending Patrick Stevedoring, Townsville to conduct the meeting in relation to the Deed of Agreement.

QUEENSLAND PORT - NOT FOR SALE



An extremely successful Rally was held at the Roma Street Forum on Tuesday 9th March, with Deputy Branch Secretary Trevor Munday speaking to the thousands of people, in total opposition to the proposed 99 year lease of the Port of Brisbane. This directly affects 350 employees of the Port and of course indirectly

affects everybody else in this Union. Again we urge all members to voice their disapproval at every level to bring this madness to an end. Joining those proudly waving the MUA flag and chanting at the top of their lungs "Queensland Port – Not For Sale".

Meetings are now scheduled fortnightly with the Department of Justice and Attorney-General with Assistant Branch Secretary Tony Austin in attendance, fighting for the employee's rights to not be disadvantaged if the lease proceeds. A code of practice has been drafted by the Government which does not cover all of our claims and is up for negotiation at a meeting on Wednesday 17th March.

DP WORLD

Assistant National Secretary Warren Smith and MUA National Organiser Bernie Farrelly were invited to the Branch to facilitate a meeting with concerned DP World employees on Monday 15th March. The meeting was a huge success; very well attended and addressed many of the critical issues that have driven the morale of the employees to possibly its lowest ebb. A follow-up meeting will be organised soon. DP World Committee members will be advising you of the details and updates.

LEVEL 1 DELEGATE'S TRAINING

Chris Doyle from the ACTU is currently running a Level 1 Delegate's Training course. Chris has many years of experience in both the Union movement and as an organiser and provides a first class learning environment. This class finishes on Thursday 18th March.

Members who are interested in Level 2 Training are asked to contact the Branch office, so that their names can be added to the list. This training is not to be missed by members who want to contribute more actively in their respective workplaces.

VALE BRUCE BADOCK

It is with great sadness we hear of the passing of long time Unionist and MUA Life Member Bruce Badock.

Bruce played a pivotal role as a Delegate, Committee member and relief Official during his time in the Union and will be sadly missed. He was less than a year into what should be a long and happy retirement.

Bruce's funeral is Thursday 18th March, 56 Breakfast Creek Road, Newstead at 10.30am. His family request in lieu of flowers, donations to the Heart Foundation would be appreciated.

Authorised by Trevor Munday, Deputy Branch Secretary and Assistant Branch Secretary Tony Austin, Maritime Union of Aust.
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