Southern Queensland Branch News

20th May 2010

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The *Branch News* of 18th March 2010 gave a comprehensive report on the Queensland Government's proposed changes to workers compensation in this State. The Government released a discussion paper for public comment from 23rd February to 24th March with some 60 submissions being received from stakeholders. The Branch participated in meetings with the Queensland Council of Unions and affiliates on 15th March, whereby the concerns raised by the MUA were included in the submissions by the QCU.

Legislation entitled "Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010" was introduced into Parliament on Tuesday 18th May, 2010.

There are significant changes to Workers Compensation and copies of the changes will be delivered to worksites. No doubt there will be an overview of changes provided by the QCU in the near future, which will provide for the key points associated with the changes.

Most provisions associated with the changes will take effect on 1st July 2010.

Further to the above, the following article from the *Branch News* of 21st January this year has been repeated, given that Patrick General Stevedores has released an article in a Newsletter, outlining a new incident procedure.

The *Branch News* has reported numerous articles associated with Workcover, which have been repeated on several occasions. Some employers seek to introduce policies in relation to incidents/injuries sustained at the workplace which seek to compel the workers to attend on, or to Company appointed medical practitioners.

The Branch sought legal advice in relation to these latest projected policy changes and were advised:

> "Whilst an employer may legitimately require attendance at a qualified practitioner such as a Doctor or Occupational Therapist for the purposes of rehabilitation and return to work process, they have no legal power to compel a worker to see their practitioners only i.e. instead of the worker's own doctor/s."
>
> Members should be aware that lodging an Incident report in accordance with the Policy at the respective workplace, usually leads to a less complicated approval of the Workcover claim.
>
> It is also timely to reiterate our previous advice that irrespective if the claim is lodged at the Doctor's surgery or with the Company in the first instance, that members should **attend** the Union Office to either provide copies of their Workcover claim and/or complete the application in the Union rooms.
>
> This allows for the member to also complete a standard form that allows the MUA to act as an agent for the member (due to privacy legislation).
>
> It also allows for the member to have solace in the fact that all records associated with Workcover remains on the member's file. WorkCover is a complex area and as such any member who has any doubts about the process should not hesitate to contact the Branch for advice.

****

BRANCH MONTHLY MEETING

The Branch monthly meeting will be held on –

TUESDAY 25TH MAY 2010 commencing at 9am
in the Union Rooms, 73 Southgate Avenue, Cannon Hill

Your attendance, if possible, would be appreciated.

****

BULK & GENERAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The National B&G Conference was held in the Victorian Branch 11-13th May with Patrick Delegates staying over to Friday 14th May to develop their Log of Claims for the up-coming Enterprise Agreements. Listed below are the Agenda items:

- Welcome to Conference by National Secretary Paddy Crumlin
- Company reports by Assistant National Secretaries Warren Smith and Ian Bray
- Group discussions mixed commissions to raise common issues in the workplace
- ITF
- Report back from work groups
- Safety on the waterfront/campaign for National Waterfront Safety Regulation
- Organising in the workplace
- Enterprise based commissions
- Legal issues – Maurice Blackburn, Lawyers
- Maritime Super
- Drug & Alcohol Policy and campaign
- Report back from Commissions
- Veterans

The National Secretary P. Crumlin's opening contribution was centralised on the main issues that confront the membership in Bulk & General.

The campaign for enforceable safety regulations, casualisation; the right for decent training; hours of work; and the development of appropriate transparent selection models. These issues are a snapshot of the agenda items that were discussed and all resonate with the members in this Port.

Company reports by Assistant National Secretaries W. Smith and I. Bray went into the issues relayed by the National Secretary; the importance of identifying mistakes that have been made in the past but more importantly strengthening networks and communications, thus providing strategies to unravel some of the previous mistakes.

Safety was at the forefront. Our campaign to develop enforceable regulations and appropriate training for all members must take precedence. No more workplace fatalities.

Branches and Delegates will receive full reports and resolutions from the Conference in the near future and workplace reports will be made.

Queensland attendees were:

Patricks Brett Membrey and Grahame Pratt (Brisbane);
Dan Grice and Chris Massey (Gladstone) and Stephen Hill (Townsville)
POAGS Earl Jones and Stephen Cumberlidge (Brisbane)
NSS Warren Baird (Townsville)
Deputy Branch Secretary Trevor Munday and North Queensland Organiser Jaime Midson

****

INDUSTRIAL ROUNDS

Branch Secretary M. Carr will be in Sydney all week at Svitzer Towage negotiations as well as attending a meeting with ASP delegates to hear a report from National Secretary P. Crumlin regarding on-going Australian Shipping involvement in the Gladstone-Weipa run. He also attended negotiations for a new Australian National Stevedores Agreement, a Company that have commenced operations in Brisbane.

Assistant Branch Secretary T. Austin is continuing with negotiations for replacement Enterprise Agreements at POBC. 3 Agreements apply in all – Dredge Brisbane, Whyte Island operations and BMT.

Deputy Branch Secretary T. Munday and Sthn NSW Branch Secretary Garry Keane are seeking to establish dates to finalise drafting or the "agreed in-principle" AAT Enterprise Agreement.

****

Authorised by Mick Carr, Branch Secretary and Trevor Munday, Deputy Branch Secretary, Maritime Union of Aust.
SQ Branch, 73 Southgate Avenue, Cannon Hill Q. 4170 Ph: 3395 7215 Fax: 3395 7688 Email: muasqld@mua.org.au