



# Southern Queensland Branch News

2<sup>nd</sup> September 2009

## OH&S HARMONISATION

The harmonisation of OH&S Legislations/Regulations is nearing finalisation with drafts to be released in the near future for public comment. The ACTU and State Councils have been involved in the process of OH&S Legislation.

A rally was held at Queen's Park on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September with a number of MUA attending at short notice. The Branch apologises for late notification to members in relation to the rally, however little notice was provided to the Branch. The rally was well represented, in particular by the Building Workers who not only have concerns in relation to the new Laws, but also have concerns about the draconian aspects of the ABCC which remains in place, despite a Rudd Labor Government being elected on the back of the Your Rights @ Work campaign.

The following resolution was endorsed unanimously:

"This meeting of workers calls on the State and Federal governments to ensure that worker's rights for a healthy and safe workplace are kept to the highest standard.

We indicate our strong dissatisfaction with the current process which is rushing the drafting of this very important piece of legislation through and not allowing for proper consultation and negotiation.

We call on both governments to lift the standards for health and safety through this current harmonisation process to the highest level as opposed to the lowest level. We fully support the maintenance of the Union's right to prosecute in NSW and its further introduction in all States and Territories of Australia.

Furthermore we demand that there be a duty for Principal Contractors in the Model OHS Provisions and the maintenance of Workplace Health and Safety Officers.

We believe that workers should have the right to:

- Stop work if their workplace is unsafe and they believe there is an immediate risk to their health and safety
- Be represented by their workplace health and safety representative
- To have the problem fixed permanently
- Access information, advice and representation in the workplace on health and safety matters
- Have their workplace health and safety representative issue PINs (Provisional Improvement Notices).

Furthermore, we call on the Queensland government not to diminish Queensland Regulations in particular those that apply to Workplace Amenities and the Construction industry.

We therefore call on the QCU and ACTU to continue to negotiate at various levels of government for the highest level of Occupational Health and Safety laws for all Australian workers."

The rally was followed by a march to Parliament House whereby a delegation met with the responsible Minister, Cameron Dick, to voice the concerns in relation to the legislation.

Listed below are Council meetings and public comment period.

The Workplace Relations Ministers Council (WRMC) meeting which was scheduled for 11 September has been moved to 24 September in Sydney. Consequently the Safe Work Australia Council (SWAC) will now meet on 18 September in lieu of 1 September.

The SWAC meeting will be considering a draft model legislation package developed by its Strategic Issues Group (SIG). The ACTU is represented on the SIG by Steve Mullins and Jarrod Moran. It is understood that the following revised timetable will be proposed:

- Public comment period commences – 28 September
- Public comment closes – 9 November
- Safe Work Australia Council – Meeting 3-9 December.

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## RELIEF OFFICIAL

Patrick Delegate and Branch Committee member Paul Williams will be a relief official in the Branch until Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2009.

Paul can be contacted on 0409 729 072.

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## PICNIC COMMITTEE MEETING

For many years the annual MUA Picnic has been a traditional event that has sought to be a social activity for the benefit of members both current, past and their families. The Picnic is like any activity that the Branch is ultimately responsible for i.e. it cannot be organised and held without the assistance of volunteers, many of whom have been providing assistance and for that matter, organising the day for a significant period of time.

Melbourne Cup day is fast approaching, therefore a meeting is being convened on **Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September at the Branch Office at 3.30pm**. All members with an interest and have suggestions in relation to the Picnic are urged to attend.

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## NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

The third Annual National Youth Conference will be held in Brisbane this year commencing Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November. For the benefit of all members, youth is defined as up to 35 years of age.

The Conference is being organised by the National Youth Committee in conjunction with the Southern Queensland Branch Executive National Youth Committee members, Adam McArthur and Mick Firmin.

The theme for this year's conference is "**Know the past, Own the future!**" and all Branches will be represented with the Conference being held at the Queensland Council of Unions, 16 Peel Street, South Brisbane.

The MUA National Council has taken affirmative action in the ongoing process of Youth Conferences as we need to make an investment in the future. This is evident by the fact that the majority of MUA Officers are more than 50 years of age. This is not a reflection that those officers are past their capacity to represent the membership as per expectations, nothing can replace experience. The Youth Conference is a fundamental mechanism that provides a vehicle for our younger members to gain a better understanding of their Union; by not just being informed about what happens at their own workplace but by being informed and appraised about all our areas of coverage.

Members who are interested in attending the Youth Conference should register their intent with the SQ Branch Office staff, Moira or Judy. Registrations will remain open until Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October '09. Should the SQ Branch receive more nominations than our allotted places, the Branch will apply the provisions of National Conference resolution 2.48.

There will be further updates in future editions of the *Branch News*.

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## MUA DELEGATION TO CORK, IRELAND

National Council convened on 20<sup>th</sup> August and determined to send a delegation to participate in the ITF Global Network Terminals meeting on 21-23 September. This decision has a two-fold aspect as Peel Ports, which operates in Ireland has manufactured a campaign to illegally sack dockers, members of the ITF affiliated union, Service Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU) under forced redundancies. Peel Ports have engaged "scabs" whilst Irish Dockers have been on strike for approx. 8 weeks.

Peel Ports began a campaign to replace the existing workforce with lower paid scabs, issuing compulsory redundancy notices to more than 50% of the workforce, whilst demanding others sign new contracts with pay cuts of 14-18%.

Members will be able to ascertain the familiarities with the illegal sacking of Patrick members in 1998.

The SQ Branch will be represented as part of the delegation by SQ Deputy Branch Secretary Trevor Munday and Patrick Delegate/Branch Committee Member Peter Bruekers. Members can be updated by going to our website, clicking on Global Unions, then to the ITF website, clicking on affiliate Unions. By choosing Ireland, the SIPTU website can be accessed.

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