



Queensland Branch News



14th January 2015

2015 NEW CHALLENGES

The working class, face renewed attacks from Australian employers associated with demands of business to review Penalty Rates as a result of the four yearly Review of Awards, but the Abbott Government launched a Review of Industrial Relations via the Productivity Commission. No doubt, any findings of the Productivity Commission will be of benefit to workers.

Prior to Christmas, the mantra of the “Everybody’s Friend” - the current Treasurer was to spend up big to assist the economy. Yeah Tony! If the big end of town has its way, workers will have nothing to spend next Christmas. Just wait for the bleating hearts.

On a State level, we will see the election held on 31st January. The Branch has sent correspondence to each and every member highlighting the importance of ridding the State of the LNP Government. A Government that has:

- thrown Public servants on the **industrial scrapheap**
- severely attacked the State Worker’s **Compensation system** by limiting access to Common Law and making legislative changes that compel prospective employees to document any workers compensation claims they may have had, to future employers.
- On top of this, they have already spent millions on Consultants in readiness to privatise State owned assets; turning publicly owned monopolies into privately owned monopolies.

Bad Legislation and bad Governments need to be ousted.

The MUA Queensland Branch has been actively participating in the *Not 4 Sale* campaign along with the Queensland Council of Unions *Stand for Queensland* campaign.

There is only so much that can be done by a process of supporting advertising campaigns. The main focus will need to have our member’s participate; whether that means a couple of hours here and there in assisting the Branch or a candidate in a seat.

We have also made assessment via our membership system and have established that a number of our members are not enrolled to vote in their electorate.

It is not too late to vote – have your say. You have up to 23rd January; the only difference will be that voters will be provided with a “declaration vote”.

There will be another Activist Meeting in the Union Rooms

at 10.00am on Friday 16th January.

Also the QCU are seeking volunteers to telephone Union members in their Call Centre from 1700 hours to 2000 hours Monday – Thursday. Please contact the QCU on 3846-2468.

If you can assist with some volunteer time in various seats, please contact the Branch for further details.

INDUSTRIAL

There seems to be an inclination that many employers are not that keen on direct negotiation in order to finalise industrial arrangements. Perhaps it has something to do with what has been mentioned in the previous article just perhaps.

This process is not just applicable to the industries where we have constitutional industrial coverage, but has far broader application. An example is in relation to the former publicly owned company – Queensland Rail (QR) now Aurizon, who have taken the unheard step of seeking to expire some six (6) Enterprise Agreements.

To say that employers are in a hurry to negotiate in our industries would be a complete fabrication.

We have many agreements that are either in the process of negotiation or will commence in the upcoming months. They are listed hereunder:

Seaswift – Small vessel operation which the MUA has a considerable membership. Initial meetings commence Monday 19th January. Negotiations continue in the non-traditional areas of **Brisbane Ferries** and **Stradbroke Ferries**. These negotiations have been ongoing for at least 19 months.

In Towage, we have seen **Pacific Basin Towage** acquired by **SMIT Lamnalco**. SMIT's only operation prior to the acquisition was in Gladstone with negotiations already in progress for an agreement that expired on 01/01/2015.

The Towage industry in Queensland has 13 Ports and the last 6 months has seen more changes than the previous 6 years.

PB Towage had recently been the successful tender for the towage operations in Mackay Harbour and Weipa. Those contracts previously held by **Svitzer**. The Branch is currently in the process of co-ordinating meeting dates to progress Port Operation proceedings.

DP World – Negotiations have been ongoing for some 11 months and Part A negotiations are now in the Fair Work Commission for Conciliation on 7th & 8th January. Local matters have progressed, however the parties remain apart on a significant number of matters.

The **Patrick** General Stevedoring Agreements for Queensland Ports, Brisbane and Gladstone expire in August 2015 and Delegates, as well as Assistant Branch Secretary P. Sheehan have already participated in a workshop along with delegates from all Patrick sites and Officials from other Branches. This workshop included participation with management to discuss the negotiation process with the expectation to progress the negotiations in a timely manner. Further meetings will be held with designated Officials and elected Rank and File Members in the near future.

Patrick Terminals Agreements also expire this year at the end of June. Elections have recently concluded and claims will be finalised by the Committee and forwarded to National Office. It is envisaged that these negotiations will continue in early February.

ATIVO Agreement for Brisbane expires at the end of the month and the MUA is seeking the assistance of the Fair Work Commission in getting ATIVO to come to the table to commence bargaining.

ASP EBA - Gladstone Weipa Bauxite vessels. The Branch concluded report-back meetings on the 4 vessels late last year and vote on the EA is currently in progress.

Enrolment to Vote – MUA Quadrennial Election. Members – to ensure you get a vote, can you confirm all your details – address, phone, email, contact etc. are up to date. More on the MUA election will be reported in the coming weeks.

DELEGATES 1-TRAINING COURSE 9-10 FEBRUARY 2015

The Branch needs members to register their interest in the Delegates 1 Course to be held in the Brisbane MUA office from Monday 9th and Tuesday 10th February **URGENTLY prior to Friday 30th January** as it is necessary to make application for Trade Union Training leave at the members applicable enterprise.

Other Training Courses throughout the year will be advised shortly.
