



MARITIME UNION OF AUSTRALIA NEWCASTLE BRANCH NEWS

February 2017

*I urge all members to become an active member of
the MUA*

Comrades, This edition of the branch news comes at a time when the right-wing forces in this country have successfully attacked and diminished penalty rates in the hospitality and retail sector. The disgraceful thing with this decision is that it should never have been the role of the Fair Work Commission to rule on penalty rates in the first place without considering the impact on lower paid workers as is their statutory obligation. Penalty rates were fought for and established many years ago in compensation for working unsociable and family unfriendly hours. When most people are enjoying the weekend many workers, including



most maritime workers, are working to ensure essential services, vital infrastructure and café latte's continue to be delivered so that the rest of the country can rightfully enjoy time with their families. This attack is strategic in nature by way of targeting those who are most under represented by unions. Many of us have family members or friends who work in the hospitality or retail sectors and unfortunately for these workers most don't belong to a union nor do they have the protection of an enterprise agreement. Anyone who doubts what a union does for its members should stop and think how lucky we are to have these conditions enshrined in our awards and enterprise agreement.

Take it as read that these attacks on long held conditions of employment will not stop in these two industry sectors. Through the recent round of award reviews the very companies that most of our members work actively sought this

outcome, and more, to seriously reduce the take home pay of maritime workers. The MUA successfully defended all of our awards from these attacks and will continue, alongside the membership, to fight for their maintenance into the future. Now is the time for vigilance and continuing to organise in your workplace to ensure

we have a strong, organised and effective union presence in all the workplaces that we represent. The decision of the Fair Work Commission should be a reminder to members that if we don't stand together then they will pick us off one by one. The best way of doing this is to stay active in your union, build solidarity

with other members and workers around the port and encourage new workers in your area to become a member of the union.

Comrades I urge all members to become an active member of the MUA. We have many forums that allow members to do this including the monthly meeting which takes place on the last Tuesday of every month, the youth committee meetings that are open to all members 35 and under, the many community events that we participate in on a regular basis and by offering your time to assist the union in its many and varied campaigns that are designed to strengthen the union and ultimately protect your jobs.

In Unity
Glen Williams
Branch Secretary

JOBS

REPRINTED FROM THE ACTU WEBSITE

This article raises the question of permanent jobs where are the jobs promised by Turnbull in the last election with his slogan of “Jobs and Growth” The reality is that seafarers have been thrown out of work by the government giving permits for Flags of Convenience ships to replace Australian Ships in the coastal trade. And in the case of the MV PORTLAND and MV Melbourne being forcible removed by the police and security men, in the case of the Portland at 1am in the morning.

September 2016

“The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) is today urging the Federal Government to take drastic action on the decline of full-time permanent jobs in Australia.

The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) employment figures show that more and more people are being forced to get by on casual and/or part-time work.

A staggering 82.3% of all jobs created in the last year were part time. Many people who manage to find work after being unemployed are stuck involuntarily in part-time work and various casual and precarious work arrangements.

The figures show underemployment is now becoming the norm. Since December 2015, businesses have increased the number of part time jobs by around 105,300, while there were 21,500 less full-time positions being offered.

Decent permanent part-time work is important for a proportion of the workforce, but we are seeing a worrying trend of insecure, precarious work for people who need full-time employment.

The following quotes are attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

“The ACTU wrote to Minister for Employment Michaelia Cash in August outlining steps that should be taken to ensure working people can earn a decent living and care for themselves and their families. We did not get a response.

“The latest jobs figures confirm there is an employment crisis in Australia, with more and more working people being forced to take insecure casual or part-time positions over permanent full-time positions.

“The Government needs a jobs plan; where are they going to create jobs and how they are going to do it.

“Any jobs plan needs to come with a solid link to decent education and training for workers that will give them the skills to do the jobs identified for our future.

“A strong, well-resourced public sector is also critical for job sustainability and growth. Provision of public services means our workforce can stay healthy, supported and skilled.

“Australian people want to work more, but in the eight years since the global financial crisis underemployment has risen two percentage points by more than 207,000 people.

“There simply aren’t enough jobs being created to sustain the demand. The time to act has long past.”





Deputy Branch Secretary Report.

Dennis Outram



Comrades

Welcome to the second edition of the Branch News. As we may all be aware by now there has been a settlement in the legal case with CSL and some of our members from action taken on the CSL Melbourne here in Newcastle. This I am sure is a great relief to those members involved and their families.

Had the pleasure of attending the Shipping Commission in December to help formulate a path forward in securing Australian blue water jobs for our members and we should be thankful for the contribution our members John Poynter, Frank Bills and Peter Low played in representing the Branch.

Other areas of note is the proposed automation of the rail facilities at the PWCS Coal Terminals that appear to be automation for automations sake but the members are determined to end up with a safe place of work rather than what appears to be a ‘do your best with what you have’ attitude that is being adopted by some sections of management.

Also the effect of the sale of Coal and Allied/Rio Tinto’s coal interests in the Hunter Valley what changes that may have on our members at the Coal Terminals is unknown at this stage but we live in hope any changes will be positive in nature as the current feeling at the Terminals seems to be not very good.

FUNCTION HELD FOR KEN LOWRIE

On Tuesday 24 January we held a function for the retirement of Ken at the Seven seas hotel that was well attended by current and former members of the union as well as former colleagues from the P&D’s. Ken spent many years of his life as a member of the Painter and Dockers union and then with the MUA as a valued member and good trade unionist. He was presented with his life membership from the union and invited to join the MUA Veterans to continue the struggle.

As many members know, Ken is fighting health issues at the moment and all his comrades wish him well in his fight and look forward to many more drinking sessions at the seven seas with him.

Shannon
Gleeson
Union Delegate

Refugee Welcome Day

Comrades the Newcastle MUA branch and Hunter Workers held a welcome to the Hunter BBQ day for the newly settled Refugees to the Hunter at Speers Point park on Saturday the 18th Feb.

The event was organised for refugees to be given information on the rights of all workers in this country, so that the newly arrived refugees to the Hunter will not be exploited by unscrupulous employers.

Translation sheets were made available to the refugee families which explained the right to join a trade Union and the right for a collective agreement and the Fair work act. It was encouraging to see refugee families gathering together explaining to each other the given information. Interpreters were also made available to assist with translation.

The day was well attended especially by our MUA youth and Jason Gough cooked his usual tasty BBQ.

For the refugees who have endured horrendous conditions in refugee camps and the horrors of war for years, I hope it was a wonderful experience for them to be welcomed and accepted into our region and I am sure as we watched the families play and integrate that they will be a great asset to our community.

Thank you to Leigh Sheers from Hunter workers for his commitment and hard work and thanks to the Newcastle MUA branch for supporting the event.

In Unity
Mal.Lingard



This too is War

Sunday 19th February 2017 is the 75th anniversary of the bombing of Darwin.

On this day 75 years ago Darwin was attacked twice, with the two forays happening only an hour apart. In this short time 243 people died, 400 were injured, of the 27 ships in the harbour 8 were destroyed and the rest were damaged. The hospital, communications, defence posts and the homes were targeted. People fled, chaos reigned until the

defence forces gathered themselves and shot at the planes with anti-aircraft guns. Over the next 20 months bombs were dropped on Townsville, Catherine, Broome, Derby

and Darwin – 900 people died – service men and women, civilians and allies.

Also today, a service was held to commemorate the 88 US naval personnel who went down with their ship “USS Peary” a Clemson class destroyer which was one of the 8 ships that were destroyed on this day in 1942.

In January this year when the Japanese Prime Minister was visiting Australia a joint Australian and Japanese memorial service was held in memory of the Japanese sub-mariners who lost their lives when HMAS Deloraine depth charged 1-124 submarine and sank it on this day in 1942 off the Darwin coast.

The members of the Hunter Peace Group honour the memory of those lost or maimed during this war-torn day; however we wish that the USA and the Australian Governments would have be-

come pacifists and declared never to go to war again. Our Dignitaries and Defence Personnel, the families of the service men and women and those who served if they are still living, attend these commemorative services; rightly pay their respects, lay their wreaths, pray and speak, but war is still happening – bombings, killings; destruction; homelessness, refugees – but still our governments – send our service men and women to war. Nothing has been learned.



At Hunter Peace Group Meeting held 12th February, member **Peter Barrack** spoke about his concerns that nothing is happening about China–America relations - mentioning an article by John Pilger which states that “**in 2011 President Obama announced “pivot to Asia” which means that almost 2/3 of US naval forces will be transferred to Asia and the Pacific by 2020.**” Further, Pilger writes of a later meeting” **The meeting was advised that in 2015 the Pentagon released its Law of War Manual which states “ the USA has not accepted a treaty that prohibits the use of nuclear weapons per se, and thus nuclear weapons are lawful weapons for the United States.”**

Today more than 400 US bases encircle China with missiles, bombers, warships AND nuclear weapons. From Australia north through the Pacific to Japan, Korea, through Eurasia to Afghanistan and India “the bases form”, says one US strategist “the perfect noose” .

One of the **Hunter Peace Group’s** aims is

to call for an **Independent Australian Foreign Policy**. It is paramount, or Australia could find itself embroiled in a war somewhere on this planet for time immemorial.

In the western world over the past few decades workers have been under attack. Be it by companies going off shore to produce their goods because it is cheaper; be it by companies who are badly managed so the company downsizes or closes; be it that it is a foreign owned company which no longer wants to build their cars, trucks, whitegoods or whatever in Australia, so they close. Or be it that they march seamen off Australian ships and replace them with foreign workers at much lower pay rates; be it they don't want to employ apprentices, because training costs money – so our young folk for decades now have not had a chance at gaining a trade (apart from a fortunate few); so thousands of workers have lost their jobs, some have been lucky enough to be re-employed, but most have not. Unemployment for the young has been running in double figures for decades; long term unemployment has also been an indictment on all our governments during this time; anti-union legislation has become the norm; particularly by conservative governments – no-one can forget how happy Malcolm Turnbull looked recently when his revamped ABCC legislation was passed; and no-one can forget how Maggie Thatcher decimated the mining industry in Britain. Attacks on unions and their members are happening across the western world. There is a huge pool of unemployed people world-wide unscrupulous

employers can call upon who will be grateful for a poorly paid, no conditions job because they are on their knees. There will be no employment for the majority of our young folk until the anti-union governments and industrialists have achieved their aim of non-unionised workplaces; then we will see jobs being offered, but most people will have to work 2 or 3 jobs in order to make ends meet.

This too is war. This is a war that never ends.

Lynda Forbes – Hunter Peace Group

ATTACK ON MEDICARE

The Federal Government is about to destroy Medicare in the interests of the private health industry's profits.

A two per cent levy from your wages is funding for Medicare

The Government tried to bring in part payment to see the GP this was vigorously opposed so the liberal Government put a freeze on rebates to the GPs which has caused some doctors to charge instead of bulk billing a sneaky way of destroying bulk billing.

We oppose the attack on bulk billing and call on all Australians to join the fight to save Medicare for the good health of all.

The Government, private health industry and drug companies want a two-tier health system, with one level of care for the wealthy and another lower level for the rest of us. This will maximise the profits of the corporations and free government of responsibility for health.

The Government is abandoning its role as a public service provider. It is destroying Australia's public sector and replacing it with a dog-eat-dog, everyone for themselves society.

FIGHT TO SAVE MEDICARE

The Liberal Government say the health system needs reform, one reform would be to increase the Medicare levy which would ensure Medicare had the funds, but the Private Health Industry would oppose this because their aim is for people to join private health, similar to the US, a public universal health scheme is a threat to their profits

The cuts to funding for public hospitals is all part of the plan to privatise public hospitals Under this Liberal Government health is now a commodity to make profit from.

Lines Report

The MUA Newcastle Lines section is currently negotiating an EBA with Svitzer. So far we have had 4 meetings, but seems plenty of more work is to be done before both parties arrive at an agreed outcome.

A number of our members have instigated a solidarity trip to Echuca to support 70 of our A.M.E.U and C.E.P.U comrades who have been locked out of their place of work being the Parmalat Dairy Processing Plant. Our members will give a detailed report in the next edition as well as the next monthly meeting.

At the time of writing the Certificate II in Maritime Operations (Linesperson) is very close to being finalized and rolled out. This certificate started back in 2006/7 with the Certificate I in Transport and Distribution (Maritime Operations-Shore Based Linesperson) and has come a long way from then to what it is today. There has been a lot of hard work and many meetings from our trainers, delegates and our official in Glen Williams to get the qualification to a Cert II. We hope this Certificate will soon be available through METL in the not to distant future.

In Unity
Newcastle Linesmen



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STRUGGLE***



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EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROVIDER

EVERY MUA MEMBER CAN ACCESS
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AND SPEAK TO A COUNSELLOR
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YOUR MENTAL WELL BEING.... OUR FOCUS!

Hunterlink CEO, Gavin Kelso, has been travelling around the country (& the world- including the UK, Philippines, Myanmar!) researching and developing mental health programs to ensure that every seafarer has access to professional mental health services, no matter where in the world they are. In Australia all MUA members can call Hunterlink to access quick, professional and reliable mental health services, 24 hours a day / 7 days.

WHAT STARTED WITH CONCERN FOR AN EMPLOYEE, SOON DEMONSTRATED HOW TEAM WORK CAN SAVE A LIFE

Sam* struggled with substance use for years, and was finding it impossible to make any changes on their own. Sam had spiralled out of control, and it was difficult to function in day to day life. Sam's health, relationships, and job were all in jeopardy. During this time, Sam's colleagues at work began to notice that Sam was struggling, and their supervisors contacted Hunterlink to find out what support we could offer and to seek advice on how best to proceed.

The team at Hunterlink worked alongside the company to provide the best possible care. By working together, Sam was able to attend residential treatment and get their life back on track. Our client's job was secure, and their health and relationships flourished. It was through hard work and co-operation between Hunterlink, the company, and the client, that these great outcomes could occur.

Sam said, *"I am grateful for everything that Hunterlink and my company were able to do to get me help. I was not ready to do it on my own, but having both my employer and Hunterlink backing me made a huge difference. I love my job and I'm so lucky to work in such a great industry".*

If you're concerned about someone at work, don't be afraid to speak up. Call Hunterlink for advice on what to do next. You may save a life.

**Name has been changed to protect client confidentiality.*

5 SELF CARE QUICK-TIPS

In our busy world of work, friends and family, one of the things we quite often forget to do is look after ourselves.



Get enough sleep - Try for at least 7hrs a day



Eat well - A good rule of thumb is to have fruit or vegies cover 1/2 your plate, protein (meat) cover a 1/4, and carbohydrates (like rice, pasta) cover the other 1/4. And don't forget a healthy breakfast to start the day!



Exercise regularly - Try to get a least 20 mins of exercise a day



Have a hobby - Do something you enjoy



Check in with how you're feeling - Our feelings are an important indicator of how we're travelling.

CALL HUNTERLINK 24 HOURS / 7 DAYS ON 1800 554 654

ALCOHOL & DRUG USE ISSUES - WORKPLACE CONFLICT - DEPRESSION & ANXIETY - FAMILY/RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS & MORE