



# MARITIME UNION OF AUSTRALIA NEWCASTLE

## BRANCH NEWS

January 2017

### SECRETARY'S REPORT

Glen Williams

Comrades, I would like to wish all members and their families all the best for the New Year. This year the branch will be putting out regular newsletter with a view to continually improving the flow of information from the union branch to the members. At this stage the newsletter will be a monthly edition and I would encourage members to feel free to forward through articles of interest to other members that we can include in future editions.

This year presents many challenges for the MUA as we move towards a possible historic merger with the mighty CFMEU. The right-wing forces in this country will be doing all they can to block the coming together of two militant and progressive unions however as always it will be the members of our union that will decide our direction not politicians.

The history of our union is littered with many mergers and amalgamations that have built us into the respected and successful union we have become today and we have the chance this year to continue to build on that and leave a stronger union than we found when we came into it. I encourage all members to consider all the information put out by the union and make your decision based upon the facts and what you feel is the best direction for our union to head in.

Industrially we have many enterprise agreements to be renegotiated this year and the branch will be continuing to target delegate training at the areas we are bargaining in. Delegate training remains a priority for the MUA as we build our power in workplaces to ensure we protect member's job security and terms and conditions of employment.

As always members need to remain active in the union and organise in your workplace to maintain the strength we have built over the past few years. As always members should know their enterprise agreement back to front and hold the boss to account whenever they breach these agreements. Enterprise agreements are a legally binding contract not an opt in opt out arrangement and members are encouraged ensure that all terms and conditions of agreements are met and if you need any advice in this area please don't hesitate to contact the branch.

There is an old saying that we are only as strong as our weakest link so get active, get involved and play a progressive part in YOUR union.



# MUA CALLS FOR ROYAL COMMISSION ON 457 VISAS

The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) is calling on the Turnbull Government to hold a Royal Commission into the abuse of subclass 457 Visas, the alleged robbing of which is robbing Australians of jobs and the national economy of precious tax dollars.

Media reports this week revealed an American company, Diamond Offshore, had staffed a third of its workforce on the Ocean Monarch rig off Port Hedland with foreign workers, mostly US citizens on 457 Visas.

This is despite there being no skills shortage for oil and gas plant operators in Western Australia.

These media reports also said the American corporate giant runs a 183-day a year roster for its fly-in fly-out (FIFO) foreign workers so they are not resident in Australia for tax purposes.

“This is an outrage and appears to be one of the biggest rorts going around because hundreds of local workers could have filled these jobs,” MUA National President Chris Cain said.

“If they had put Australian workers on that rig they would have been paying tax back into this country. Bringing Americans in here is an absolute disgrace when Australians are out of work.

“There should be a Royal Commission into multi-national companies which come into Australia and abuse 457 Visas to take local jobs and pay no tax.

“Millions and millions of dollars in PAYE tax is being lost out of the Australian economy – money that could be spent on schools, hospitals and other public works.”

In August last year, the MUA celebrated a High Court win which ensured Aussie workers in our offshore oil and gas industry were not replaced with cheap foreign labour.

Maritime unions took the then Assistant Immigration Minister, Senator Michaelia Cash, to court after she ignored the will of the Senate, and used a ministerial determination to grant working visa exemption to foreign worker on offshore vessels.

“The MUA took it all the way to the High Court and won. This latest rort shows the lengths giant multi-national companies will go to get around the law of the land in Australia to avoid paying their fair share in tax,” Mr Cain said.

“The Abbott/Turnbull Government was quick to call a Royal Commission into unions, yet here, when it is clear the 457 Visa system is being abused, they sit on their hands instead of acting immediately in the national interest

# WHY POLITICS

T A Curphey MUA Vets

How often have you heard people say “I’m not interested in politics” yet irrespective of whether you are interested or not political decisions have an effect on your daily living.

When you are born you have to have a birth certificate, when you die you have to have a death certificate and if you want to drive a car you have to have a drivers licence, when you are of age you have to attend school, also when you purchase a beer or cigarettes, income tax is taken out of your pay, all these are political acts of parliament, in effect politics that have an effect on your lives.

If we consider politics in relation to trade unions and the effect on your wages and conditions ,and therefore the quality of life for you and your family, it may go some way to answering the question, why politics, who do they serve.

Employers through their organisations lobby governments to get laws passed that benefit their business in order for them to make the maximum profit. They maintain offices in Canberra that continually lobby MP,s to get changes that benefit their clients which invariably are big corporation many with international links..

Activity by unions in organising workers to achieve their demands come into conflict with the employers aim to make the maximum profit, their response is to get parliament to pass legislation to protect their profits.

Consider “Work Choices” the result of legislation brought down by the Liberal Government. this was a political act that seriously attacked the ability of unions to act on behalf of its members. It brought in individual contracts which disadvantaged workers, some lost penalty rates and conditions and in some cases wages were cut in real terms. Here was a perfect example of how political legislation effected a workers living standards whether they believed in politics or not!

From the foregoing we can see how politics influence the quality of life for workers and their families. For a better future workers have to engage in politics

The business organisation of employers never cease in their use of political influence as instanced in this report in the Australian Financial Review 16.1.17 under the headline

“Business push for workplace changes”

“Business is pressuring the Turnbull government to introduce changes to the Fair Work Act this year after voicing concerns over the slowing economy and the government’s failure to respond to the Productivity Commission’s recommendations on workplace reform.”



## SURELY PEACE SHOULD BEGIN AT HOME

It has just been reported that 2016 was the hottest year on record. Temperatures have been rising each year for the past 3 years and each of these years was reported as "being the hottest on record". Jonathon Overpeck, a Climate Scientist at the University of Arizona said of the year's temperatures - "Climate change is real, it is caused by humans and it is serious."

I know what he means - my temperature has been steadily rising over the past 3 years too, and it is caused by humans and it is serious - it is caused by living under the appalling policies our Federal government has, and is, imposing upon us - and more:

The sneaky, dishonest dismantling of Medicare and our public hospital system.

The '**Letters of Demand**' that are being sent to thousands of welfare recipients; the thousands of those letters that are incorrect; and the abysmal response from the "Hon Christian Porter MP - Minister for Social Services - and we have to call him "Honourable" Oh, and now they are going to be sending the same letters to those on the Aged Pension and Disability Pension.

Then there is the atrocious treatment of young offenders in some of our youth prisons. Can you believe that those guards could be so cruel? Is that how they treat their own children?

Add to the above the never-ending attacks on the Trade Union Movement, particularly the CFMEU - an article written by the Chief Executive Officer of the Business Council of Australia Jennifer Westacott "**Why our Children Need a Strong ABCC**" back in October 2016 - contains the following -

"Let me tell you what the ABCC means for Australian families and their children. The building industry employs more than one million people and is our third biggest employing industry; so many of your children will start their working lives in this industry. Almost 20 percent of young people working fulltime are in building and construction. Many of them are doing apprenticeships and for the most of them it is their first proper job. We're talking about 150,000 youngsters starting from the age of 15.

But what if your child's first job was in an enterprise rife with bullying, intimidation, and physical and verbal violence. We now have four Royal Commissions over 40 years telling us the industry has a culture of systemic corruption and unlawful conduct including corrupt payments, physical and verbal violence, threats, intimidation."

Do you reckon she's talking about the Employers?

We can add to this volatile mix -

(Poverty line = 50% of median income) single \$426.30 pw; couple with 2 children \$895.22 per week)

2.9 million (13.3%) of all people are living below international acceptable poverty line;

731,300 (17.4%) of all children are living in poverty.

36.1% of all people receiving social security payments are living below the poverty line

Every day in Australia 1 in 200 people are homeless; 42% of homeless are under 25

What a disgrace - we are a wealthy country - what an indictment on our "powers that be" who would rather spend \$192 billion dollars over the next 10 years on - 12 submarines, 9 future fighters; 12 offshore patrol ships - than looking after their Mums and Dads, their sons and daughters, their aged, their sick, their disabled.

Surely PEACE should begin at home.

Lynda Forbes, Hunter Peace Group

19<sup>th</sup> January 2017



Hunter Peace group meets every second Monday at 4-30 at Hunter Union Building next meeting Monday the 13 of February all welcome make your voices heard come along and join.





Lakediary.com

## SAVE MEDICARE

“Mr Turnbull says he is committed to Medicare, but he has already cut billions from Medicare and wants to privatise Medicare payments. Labor is and will continue to fight these cuts.

Mr Turnbull’s record on Medicare is clear:

- 
- Mr Turnbull is cutting \$57 billion from our public hospitals
- Mr Turnbull supported the introduction of a GP Tax
- When Labor succeeded in shaming the Government into dropping their GP Tax, they introduced it by stealth, cutting \$2 billion from Medicare rebates through their freeze on indexation
- Mr Turnbull wants to increase the cost of prescriptions – by up to \$5 per script – hitting some of the sickest patients the hardest
- Mr Turnbull has cut \$650 million from pathology and diagnostic imaging, meaning that patients are likely to pay more for vital preventive and diagnostic tests such as pap smears, MRIs, X-Rays and CT Scans.

Now Mr Turnbull wants to privatise the Medicare payments system, putting patient records and 1,400 jobs at risk.

This is just the beginning - the thin end of the wedge – the Liberals will not rest until they have savaged bulk billing and eliminated universal healthcare in this country. Everyone will pay more and the sickest, the poorest and those in rural areas will be hit hardest” Sharon Bird MP Federal Member for Cunningham.

***ORGANISE TO SAVE MEDICARE  
AND  
MORE FUNDING FOR PUBLIC HOSPITALS***

## Youth Committee Report



Comrades late last year the Newcastle youth committee donated \$5,500 to the John Hunter Hospital. This was organised by Joey Schneider and Steven Murry. Since then we have had a lot of members saying what a great job the Newcastle youth are doing.

Coming up we have a video link with the National youth. The discussion that we will be having is about the future of the youth movement and how we can revitalise other youth groups that have dropped off.

Danny Cain is trying to bring in a new position in for the youth movement he has a Youth organiser to work out of National office and to be dedicated to organising the Youth movement.

All Youth are welcome to be the involved in this video hook up, it will be on the 30/01/2017 at 1130am.

We will also have a youth meeting on that day after the video link up at 2pm.

I would like to encourage all youth to attend and any new Youth workers are welcome, also if you work with other Youth that have not been to a meeting please bring them along.

The Newcastle Youth have also been asked to be a part of the BBQ at Speers point park to welcome the Syrian refugees, I think this is important to show the new members to our community that Australia is not just a Nation of racist rednecks, and that these people are welcome.

On the day, there will a BBQ and different types of sport.

I encourage all youth to attend and support this event.

In Unity

Jason Coppola

President Youth Committee

## ***Rally to protest M V Melbourne sell-out***



### **A Happy new year to all Branch Members.**

This year will be an extremely important time for Campaigning given the ongoing attacks on the Trade Union movement by this conservative government.

The Branch has been involved in the organisation of a Welcome day for Refugees in the Hunter. This event will take place on the 18<sup>th</sup> February at Speers point Park.

The day will start off with an indigenous smoke ceremony to welcome the refugees to our community. There are many planned activities on the day.

The MUA trailer will be there to cook a BBQ and we encourage members to bring their families along to meet with and build friendships with Refugees and importantly talk to them about Trade unions and the role we play in the community.

We need to encourage these refugees to be part of the trade union movement and not be exploited by opportunist Employers who may see them as vulnerable as new arrivals. We also will be working to break down Racial barriers and hold out the hand of friendship to them with our families especially our children.

The Branch will be delivering Delegate 1 and 2 Training in the Branch rooms starting on the 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> February. This will be a combined course of both 1-2 Delegate training. There is also a Public speaking course being delivered on the 17<sup>th</sup> February in the Branch. This will assist members with the skills and confidence required to address meetings and gatherings of workers.

National training officer Mick Cross will be delivering these courses and all sections are encouraged to send potential Delegates to participate.

Any member who would like to do any delegate training please contact the Branch.

In Unity

Mal.Lingard



## ***MUA VETERANS REPORT***

**National secretary Fred Krausert**

### ***NATIONAL CONFERENCE A GREAT SUCCESS***

**I congratulate you all on a wonderful M.U.A Conference on the Gold Coast early this year, for the unity and power at that conference, it showed our past our present and a course set for the future even under the extreme difficult course we are on, workers and retirees are on the same vessel that is navigating through extreme difficult time**

### **FEDERAL ELECTION**

**We can be proud of the M.U.A. Veterans as every branch participated in the federal election beyond their call, as with all the other vital issues that confront the union and the retirees as well, we support our comrades in other unions and organizations, most branches are involved with the ACTU RUN hook ups as well as the two major retired organizations CPSA and FGFP we are addressing the position of having discussions with COTA we understand that to have an input into the government decisions regarding the aged we must be involved with the major retired organizations understanding that the people are tired of the politics of this country we hear it on the talk back shows and every second person express the negativities of both side of politics, which at times look more like once sided politics ,with garbage like One Nation burrowing its way into the parliament, this is no prize for the people of Australia only more leverage for the Ultra -Right of politics, the course of division is never a winner.**

### **VETERANS AGM**

**Our A.G.M. was the best so far with going over the time allowed we addressed International Speakers, addressing our Resolutions, Branch Reports, attacks from the TPP, Pharmaceutical attack on the aged, Trade, Manufacture, Shipping and its effect, National Secretary Paddy Crumblin report, lots of work went into the AGM Conference we thank Michel Summers and the staff for all their help and support.**

**Our course is set for the next four years and beyond, understanding there will be many challenges ahead for the retired community.**

**With Age, illness and hardships facing some older people in our communities the challenges facing us daily with media driving negative attitudes instead of highlighting the good work being done by the Silent Marjory with each day addressing and giving their contribution to our country, they are the real heroes of our society, and the AGED contribute a large slice of that voluntary work, as well as roles of careers in their own and others families**

### **THE DANGER OF WAR**

**Comrades there are major concern facing us at this present time nationally Internationally, and with each state having their own concerns in terms of their state government policies.**

**The first and most important is PEACE IS UNION BUSINESS and peace at this time is so vulnerable, extremely vulnerable with the uncertainty of world politics, and the hysteria thrown at the population daily, with China/ U.S threat of a war the building up of U.S. troops in the Eastern bloc around Russia, the Middle East conflicts which were created on a LIE. And 12years latter people are still getting killed on that lie, with mass killing and destabilizing in Africa and with all of this is the Pain of hunger, our Children dying along with all of the horrible instabilities that may never mend.**

**Join the struggle for**

**World Peace and a world**

**with out war**

