

MUA NATIONAL VETERANS ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

May 2011

"Retired from the workforce not the struggle"

Message from the National Secretary

Comrades and Friends,

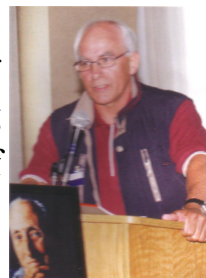
It is with sadness that I start this newsletter with the passing of Comrade Harry Black, on a personal note I was honored to have known Harry and worked with him in the MUA Veteran Association, he was an outstanding leader of the working class.

This is an outline of the position that the retired movement is in at this time in our history, with a change of state governments and the vulnerability of the federal government; there are many challenges ahead of us.

1. Fair Go For Pensioners

There has been a lot of work done with the Fair Go For Pensioners in the last twelve months or since our last AGM. With our last AGM continuing endorsement of the National campaign of the FGFP, we have since bought Tasmania into the campaign with the Tasmania's Retired Unionist Pensioners of Tasmania, Ethic Pensioners of Tasmania and Councils of Tasmania, a delegation to Canberra to lobby the independents on the increase of the pensions from 27.7 to 35% of the AMW, with the position of each state having the challenges of the rising cost of living, with pensioners

concessions still being issues in most states, and our governments not addressing price control there is a lot of work to do for all of us.



With the Federal government destroying the Public Health System, allowing private operators to move into the profitable sections of health system, and dentistry not being part of the health system, is a major issue for us all. The funding that should be allocated to these areas, are instead, moved into tax concessions for the multi nationals and their shareholders leaving the Australian people having to foot the bill for governments.

FGFP is the only National Body able to address these issues we must endeavor to organize every section of the retired movement to gain a united front for our campaign.

2. Alliances of retired Unionist

NSW has two bodies representing the retired union movement, this in itself is not in the best interest of the retired union movement or for the retired people of Australia. With individuals not going to work with the FGFP and very little interest in merging into one body for the benefit of the retired movement. This itself is a stumbling block, there is no way that a campaign of any type can be successful unless there is a united force.

With the hard work been done in Tasmania and West Australia having to be addressed, we are not in a position in NSW, being the largest state in population or any other state being divided due to self-interest and not addressing the overall welfare of the Australian retired population. We can only address this vital issue by the two bodies coming together or any other body, and forming one or doing away with all and a new body being formed.

3. TPPA (Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement)

There have been grave concerns with regards the secret or non-publication of any information that is going on with the TPPA around the Pacific Rim.

ACTU has a campaign going with very little public involvement and there is a cost to attend the functions, MUA Veterans with the support of the MUA have not sat idle and most branches are involved in the campaign. I notified all our concerns to all the major branches secretary's and we are seeking support from all federal politicians with very little response so far.

We know that the US Drug companies are not happy with the pricing system in Australia and they want to abolish it, especially the generic drugs and the control over the cost of drugs in Australia, with the Prime Minister overriding the Pharmaceutical Benefit Advisory Committee and moving it to Cabinet leaves us wondering the outcome, not even the Libs did away with the PBAC. Our health system is the envy of other nations until the Howard and Abbott government cut down on funding and moved it towards privatisation and now it's being done by stealth. I praise the workers that are working in the public health system with extreme under funding and manning they are

carrying the system.

There is also the position of the Educational clauses, the position of the world tribunal to oversee dispute's and fines with an attack on sovereignty of a country.

4. ACTU and Retired Movement

There has been campaigning by the MUA on behalf of MUA Veterans to seek recognition of the contribution of the retired movement and seeking support in our campaigns. The ACTU is still mapping the retired movement and is taking all the information to their executive meeting in July.

Without the Union Movement support, it will be difficult to gain any headway even if it's only finical help to the individual union originations to their retired members, some THC have been very supportive, Sydney is still to come out publicly and support the campaigns, I am still waiting to get an invite to address the Sydney THC on our campaign.

5. The Budget and its effect on Pensioners

Comrades I do not have to give a report regards to the outcome of the Budget it gave nothing other than top boxes for TV's but the necessities like Dental, Housing, Transport and Price Control only the SURPLESS of the budget, was the main issue and going soft on the big end of town, not forgetting that working class and retired families will pay the price.

The CARBON issue is a very difficult issue with the possibility that we maybe being misled, governments rely on and endorsed UN IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change). Are we aware

that according to UN IPCC figures, the Earth annual production of CO2 is 97% from Nature and 3% from all human activity, are we aware that Nature completely controls atmospheric CO2 levels, 4000 scientists do not agree with this Carbon hype, but we are caught up with the libs running a campaign against but not for the reasons that we are concerned about, but to protect their mates in big business. This is not an easy issue but one that will affect everyone in Australia and possibly divide some communities, this is not the way for governments to address an issue, one that will change the purse of working and retired people of this country and the whole structure of our society. We need to do away with pollution we need to address natural energy, it should never be the private sector controlling energy.

6. Bus Trip to Canberra

There is a proposal that a bus trip to Canberra be in September, during the sitting of parliament, so we can take our campaign to the politician's again letting them know we are not going away. If this proposal eventuates, hopefully Victoria will send a bus also to strengthen our position.



7. Set Top Boxes

While some pensioners may welcome set top boxes announced in the May Budget it would have been better if the government had announced that dental care for pensioners and low wage workers would be covered by Medicare.

The May Budget

The 50 training places for dentists are better than nothing, but they equate to just one trainee dentist for every 10,000 people sitting on a public dental waiting list.

Putting off dental reform means that 500,000 low income people will continue suffering on long waiting lists to get basic dental treatment in the grossly underfunded public dental system.

Dental should be put under Medicare so that pensioners aren't denied dental treatment because they can't afford it. This must be addressed in the next budget.

Combined Pensioners and Superannuates NSW

MUA Vets National Policy

The demand for dental care for pensioners to be covered by Medicare is the policy of the MUA Veterans Association. We have made representations to the government in the past but to date this has not been successful.

Branches need to make representation to their local Federal MPs and also write to the Minister for Health.

**The Hon Nicola Roxon MP
Minister for Health and Ageing**

MG 50

Parliament House

Canberra ACT 2600

Tel: (02) 6277 7220

Fax: (02) 6273 4146

VALE HARRY BLACK



Retired National President

Harry Black was a member of the union for more than half a century. His contribution to both the union and international transport workers was unsurpassed. He remained a committed activist for peace, justice and human rights.

He joined the Waterside Workers Federation and became a wharfie in 1951. Harry was Sydney's most loved wharfie and this was confirmed in July 2009 when he joined MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin, NSW Premier Nathan Rees and Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore to unveil the stretch of land with a rich history for waterside workers now officially known as The Hungry Mile.

He attended local primary schools to pass on his wisdom and stories of the Hungry Mile to the next generation.

Harry served in the union as a rank and file activist on the Sydney docks, as a rank and file wharfie, a delegate, a vigilance officer, vice-president, senior vice-president Sydney branch and as a rank and file representative on Federal Council of the Waterside Workers Federation, then as a union elder leading the MUA National Veterans Association as Secretary from 2002 - 2009. Then National President MUA Vets. Harry, despite failing health, remained an active member to the end.

From 1951, Harry worked on the Sydney waterfront, mainly in Sussex Street and along the Hungry Mile. Like many, Harry attended the pick-up down in Sussex Street or on the Mile hoping for a job each day for a princely sum of 12/- per day. He joined the Communist Party and worked tirelessly for a socialist future as the only alternative that could solve the problems facing workers and their families.

We salute the memory of a great man a true son of the working class.