

AMWU

News

Australian Manufacturing Workers Union



AMWU

Winter 2019

We're building power for workers

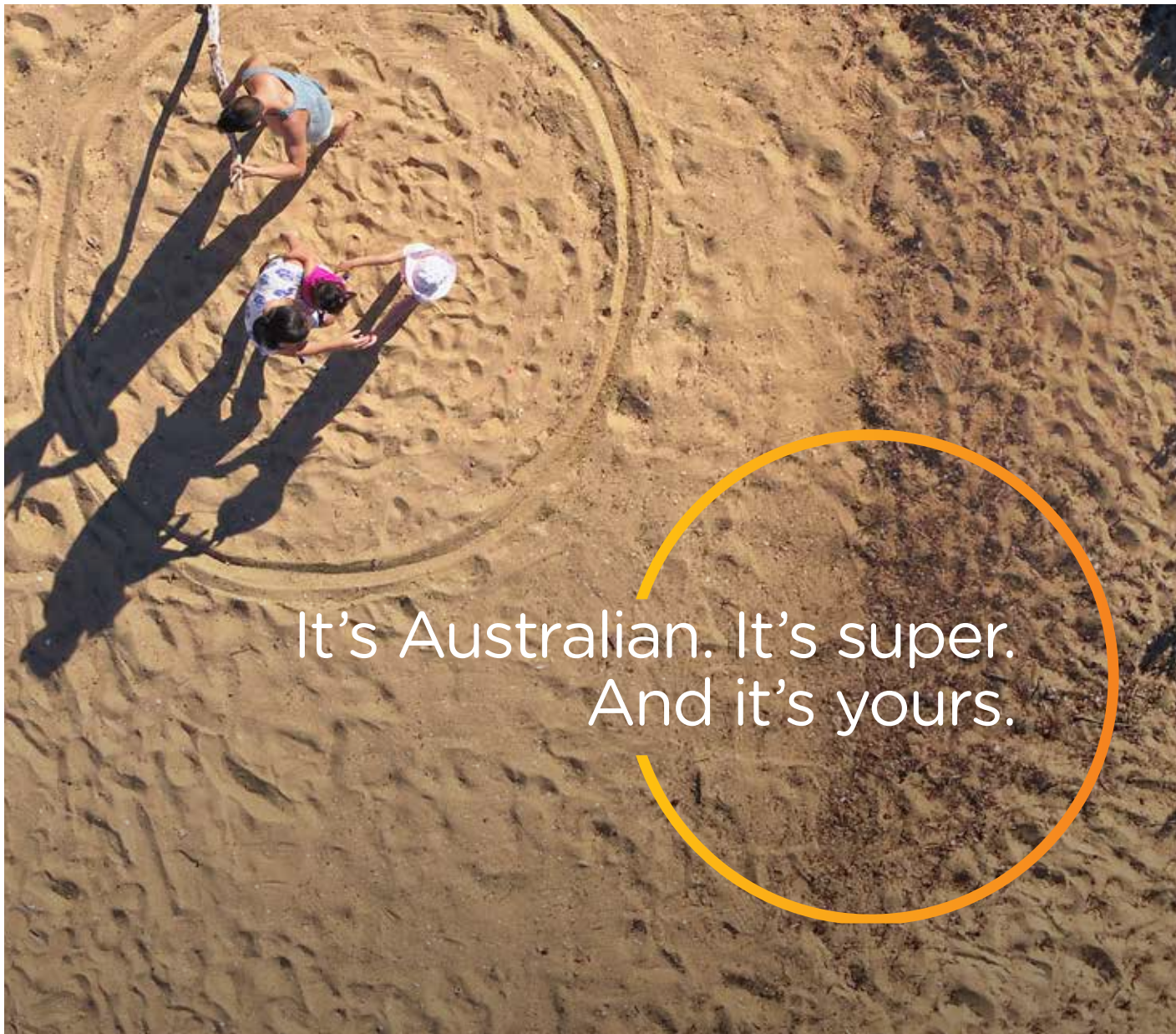
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FIFO Code aims to address mental health

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Editorial

Members will be aware that your union campaigned against the re-election of the Liberal/National Government at the recent Federal Election. Your National Council supported this proposal based on the evidence before us that the Morrison Government offered very little for members and their families.

By way of the ACTU, we had instead negotiated a number of significant reforms with the ALP which we determined were worthy of support. To name a few, these included policies to crack down on the exploitation of casual and labour hire employees, to put the balance back for workers in bargaining, to support increased wages through the National Wage Case and to make sure AMWU members could make best use of their union at work.

Everyone's an expert now on what happened on May 18 and I've got my thoughts about it as I'm sure you do too. The ACTU has set up a review of what happened with the joint union campaign and this will help us think through how we best represent workers in future elections.

Nevertheless, we can still be very proud of our efforts and our contribution to the Change the Rules campaign.

AMWU members and delegates took the lead in the Change the Rules campaign. I want to thank everyone who stepped up during this election. Thank you for giving up your time to talk to your fellow workers about the need to Change the Rules.

Whilst governments come and go, our work and that of our movement remains unchanged. We have a proud history of nearly 170 years of fighting for the rights of workers and another term of a Liberal Government won't change that.

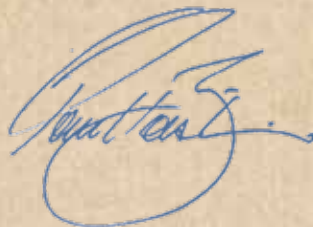
This month, AMWU State Conferences are taking place. These are the first meetings of the new State Conferences arising from the New Union Project. The New Union Project brought together our divisional memberships into one common, united membership, and for the first time our rank-and-file delegates will make up a clear majority of conference delegates.

State Conferences will elect State Councils which will also have majority rank-and-file representation. Rank-and-file leadership of all of the AMWU's governing bodies is crucial for us to remain a member-driven and member-led union.

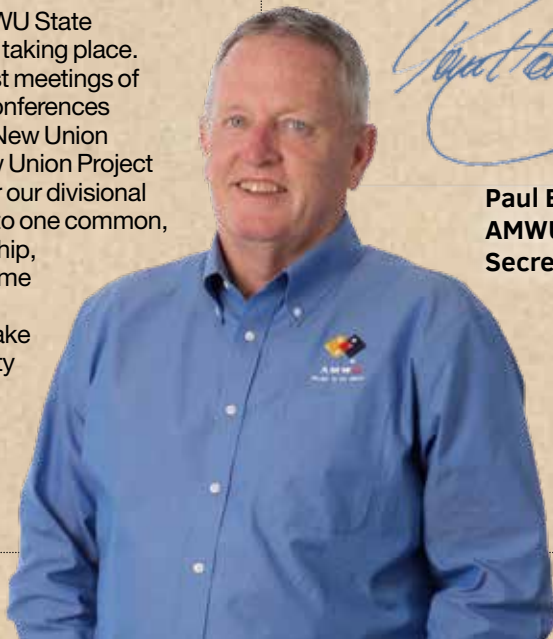
Also arising from the New Union Project, our seven new National Industry Committees are working on organising plans to build strength and power and deliver outcomes in our core workplaces and industries. We are working towards delivering a strong and secure pipeline of manufacturing, print, vehicle, and food jobs. Our success in securing generations of shipbuilding jobs points the way for our work in other industries, particularly in train manufacturing and maintenance where the potential for new, well paid, secure and local jobs is enormous if done right.

Whilst we always seek to influence policy through election campaigns, our main focus is always to build strength and power in our workplaces and industries. Collectively, the ability of our members to influence change and make a difference to the future of our industries and jobs shouldn't be underestimated. The best way to achieve that is a strong, growing, and effective union.

In unity



Paul Bastian
AMWU National
Secretary



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Please contact your union organiser for updates.

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Sick leave entitlements under attack

Imagine tearing open a delicious 52 gram Cadbury Cherry Ripe chocolate bar, only to find 38 grams of chocolate inside? You'd feel pretty ripped off.

Cadbury is trying to give its shift workers the same feeling, launching a legal action in the Federal Court to reduce the amount of sick leave that shift workers are entitled to.

The company is trying to cap the amount of sick leave hours that can be taken in a day, regardless of how many hours an employee works.

As it stands, under the Fair Work Act, workers have access to ten days of sick leave a year, meaning that workers who do 12 hour shifts every day should have access to 120 hours.

Cadbury, however, is trying to restrict the minimum entitlements of sick leave for all workers under the Fair Work Act to just 76 hours.

If that sounds like a dodgy argument, then you're right. The Fair Work Commission has already rejected it, so now the bosses have appealed to the full bench of the Federal Court to try and get their way.

But the story gets worse. The company singled out two shift workers from its Tasmanian chocolate plant, Natasha and Brendan, and ran its case against the AMWU and those two individual workers.

What's more, Cadbury had some heavyweight support in its corner. The Australian Industry Group (AIG) joined the Federal Court action, while Federal Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations Kelly O'Dwyer also sent in a legal team to argue in favour of the bosses.

Acting Tasmanian Branch Secretary Jacob Batt said Natasha and Brendan, who are both Workplace Delegates, had done a fantastic job in standing up to the bullying tactics of Cadbury, and its parent company Mondelez.

"This is a case of a huge multinational company, backed by the Federal Coalition Government and the AIG, all trying to stop workers from accessing their rightful workplace entitlements," Jacob said.

"The Liberals won't lift a finger to protect penalty rates, but as soon as big business calls out for help they send in the lawyers immediately."

The case was heard by the Federal Court on 21 February, and everyone is now waiting anxiously for the judgement to come out.



Cadbury workers Natasha and Brendan outside the Federal Court in February this year.

FIFO Code aims to address mental health

The Western Australian State Government has launched the country's first code of practice to help promote and maintain mentally healthy workplaces for FIFO workers in the resources and construction sectors.

The code of practice aims to tackle the problems of stress, anxiety, depression and suicide among fly in, fly out workers.

WA State Secretary Steve McCartney said the AWMU and other unions have spent years campaigning to get the issue of mental health among FIFO workers on the political agenda.

"The Western Australian Government have had 25 years to get this right," Steve said.

"They knew people were dying in their workplaces and nothing was done.

"The WA Union movement ran a campaign collecting thousands of signatures for our petition, forcing the former Liberal State Government to hold a Parliamentary Inquiry so that the experiences of workers and their families could be heard," Steve said.

The current Labor Government has now picked up the code which outlines risk management for FIFO workplaces, and also has practical recommendations such as:

- Ensuring work and travel rosters allow sufficient time for rest, recovery and recreation to combat fatigue and so workers can spend time with friends and family
- Shorter, family friendly, compressed rosters
- Creating the infrastructure to allow workers to communicate with family and friends throughout the day, even when working remotely
- Providing predictable and consistent accommodation arrangements and ending the practice of motelling, to limit the stress and anxiety on workers.



But while the code is a step forward, it remains a voluntary program, which means companies cannot be held accountable for applying it to their workplaces.

"The government has more confidence in these companies than we have," Steve said.

"We'll be inspecting accommodation for FIFO workers across the State, gathering evidence to feed back to the State Government that their voluntary code - despite their best intentions - has no teeth.

"We're confident we can build the case for legislation to enforce the code."

Casual workers tell polities how it is



The replacement of full-time and part-time jobs with casual labour is a trend that has affected virtually every industry in Australia.

Over forty per cent of workers are in some form of insecure or precarious work, and around one in four workers are on casual contracts.

So when the Federal Court last year decided that casual workers who were doing regular hours should be entitled to conditions like sick leave and holidays, it was a ray of hope for casual workers across the country.

Industry groups and the Coalition Government, however, didn't like it one little bit. They were worried that the decision might affect corporate profits.

In a sneaky move, the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations Kelly O'Dwyer introduced a new regulation to make the Federal Court decision ineffective.

National Secretary Paul Bastian said the regulation would allow employers to offset a worker's unpaid leave entitlements with any loading previously paid, but it would not ensure workers were paid their legal entitlements to prevent exploitation.

"This regulation lets bad employers off the hook," Paul said. "It encourages them to continue misclassifying workers as casuals, despite the real nature of their work being permanent."

AMWU members Peter Richards and Chris Wilson decided they weren't going to take the Coalition's attack on their rights lying down. The pair packed their bags and went to Canberra to speak directly with politicians about their experiences.

They spoke to people from right across the political spectrum, including Greens Senator Janet Rice, Greens MP Adam Bandt, and Western Australian One Nation Senator Peter Georgiou.

Victorian Chris Wilson didn't pull any punches when he told the politicians about the reality of being a casual.

"There's no job security whatsoever," Chris said. "It's a terrible way to live - everyone's under stress and pressure non-stop."

Peter Richards, from North West Tasmania, said politicians didn't understand how the casualisation of work was affecting people in their local communities.

"We need to tell our MPs about how bad it is. If we keep going down this track Australia will have no more full-time jobs."

The good news is that Peter and Chris received a warm welcome from the politicians they met in Canberra, and the message seemed to be getting through. The new regulation has not yet been enforced, but big business is not going to give up.

The AMWU will continue fighting to make sure long-term casuals who work regular hours can get access to permanent status, and enjoy the security that permanent employment brings.



Top: (L-R) National Assistant Secretary Glenn Thompson with Chris Wilson, Peter Richards, and National Secretary Paul Bastian in Canberra. Bottom: Chris and Peter didn't pull any punches in Canberra.

"We need to tell our local MPs about how bad it is. If we keep going down this track Australia will have no more full-time jobs."

Changing the Agenda

Without any policy direction of its own, the Coalition survived on scare campaigns and the power of commercial media networks - including an unprecedented \$80 million advertising splurge from Clive Palmer.

Sydney



Adelaide



Melbourne



Hobart



Perth



Brisbane



In the face of this onslaught, the trade union movement campaign came together in a show of strength and unity. The Change the Rules campaign put fairness back in the national spotlight, and made wages one of the central issues of the election.

Through it all, AWMU members were front and centre, turning out in huge numbers for rallies across Australia.

Members also gave their time to go door-knocking, phone-banking, letterboxing and handing-out How-to-Vote cards at pre-poll booths and on election day.

It was a mighty effort.

ACTU Secretary Sally McManus said the momentum from the Change the Rules campaign would continue to build.

"I thank every union member and volunteer who has been part of the

fight so far to make Australia a fairer place," Sally said.

"The election of the Morrison Government doesn't change the fact that we have the highest level of inequality in 70 years and that more Australians are in insecure work than ever before.

"To the millions who voted to change the government: we will continue to fight for better rules for working people.

The election of the Morrison Government doesn't change the fact that we have the highest level of inequality in 70 years and that more Australians are in insecure work than ever before.

Perth



Melbourne



Sydney



Ipswich



Melbourne



Cairns



Sydney



Moranbah



Mackay



Townsville



Maryborough



"To the millions who voted to change the government: we will continue to fight for better rules for working people."

ALL HANDS ON DECK FOR UNION SHIPBUILDING FEDERATION

The AMWU has joined forces with three other unions to form a powerful alliance of workers right across Australia's shipbuilding industry.

While the Australian Shipbuilding Federation of Unions (ASFU) is yet to be officially launched, it's already shaping up as a powerful force.

The ASFU is a joint initiative of the AMWU, Australian Workers' Union (AWU), Electrical Trades Union (ETU/CEPU) South Australia and Professionals Australia. Collectively, the four unions cover everyone who works in the sector, from engineers and managers through to welders, fitters, cleaners, and administrative staff.

AMWU Assistant National Secretary Glenn Thompson and convenor of the ASFU said the Federation is based on four core principles:

- Campaigning to secure a pipeline of shipbuilding work that maintains consistent and growing employment across the supply chain and the industry, and avoids the "valley of death"
- Demonstrating that Australia has the skills and ability to engineer and build high quality, world-class, advanced manufacturing products
- Focusing on training and skills – supporting apprentices and graduate programs, and up-skilling existing workers. This leads to qualifications and opportunities in the shipbuilding industry for local workers

- Delivering high wage, secure jobs with good conditions that are consistent across the industry.

Glenn Thompson said the four unions involved in the Federation have already been working together informally for a number of years, so the establishment of the formal alliance was a logical next step.

"Around three and half years ago, we agreed on a strategy to secure the future of the shipbuilding industry, and we were all active in political, industrial and community campaigning," Glenn said.

"Through the Future of Australia's Naval Shipbuilding Senate inquiry, we were able to get the Federal Government to commit to building all 12 future submarines in Australia, nine frigates, 12 Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs), and 21 patrol boats.

"Now we're working together to try to secure the existing skills base in the lead-up to the start of these major projects."

Glenn said a key focus of the ASFU would be to work with the primary contractors on the navy projects to ensure workers have a voice across industry and throughout the supply chain.

"The Federation will be looking to secure the pipeline of projects, maximising Australian industry participation while also focusing on skills development and training, and delivering secure jobs with good wages and conditions.

"Across these projects there are around 2,000 firms in the supply chain, so by working with the primary contractors we can develop an industry approach to the sector.



The first Adelaide meeting of ASFU activists had a great turnout from AMWU, ETU/CEPU, AWU and PA members.

"Down the track we'll also be looking to extend the involvement of the Federation beyond naval shipbuilding and into the commercial sector as well."

Glenn Thompson said there were huge opportunities to leverage the Government's 37-year \$90 billion shipbuilding plan across the national economy.

"Unions are determined to ensure that this long-term program builds skills, jobs and capabilities beyond shipbuilding, and builds and supports small to medium-sized enterprises right across the manufacturing sector," he said.

WestRock runs into a hard place

WestRock probably thought that Australian workers would be a pushover when they purchased local family-owned company Hannapak.

One of the world's largest multinational packaging corporations, WestRock has form when it comes to trying to bully its workforce

In 2016, workers at a WestRock box factory in Sioux City, Iowa, went on strike for a month, while last year WestRock settled an \$8.5 million class action over claims the company deprived 800 California employees of wages, overtime and appropriate breaks.

Coming into its first Enterprise Agreement negotiation in Australia, WestRock bosses demanded to halve the existing EA entitlement of 16 Rostered Days Off (RDOs) a year to just eight.

They also wanted to remove and replace the existing flexibility clause.

But WestRock management didn't count on the strength, unity and determination of AMWU members.

Workers at the North Richmond packaging plant, on Sydney's North Western fringe, knew they would have to dig in and fight to save their conditions, so they resolved to take a range of industrial actions, including a 24-hour stoppage.

The dispute caught the public attention when a protest rally out the front of the packaging plant distracted passing motorists.

Rubbernecking drivers, eager to see what the fuss was about, slowed up as they went past. And on Sydney's notoriously congested roads, a ripple can quickly become a tidal wave.

Before long, traffic queues on Bells Line Road were stretching back for kilometres, while bus services were delayed by up to an hour.

As a result, the WestRock strike became big news in the local area, and the plight of workers was the talk of the town.



WestRock workers took to the picket line with support from Print National Secretary Lorraine Cassin, Organisers Belinda Griggs and Michelle Parkin, and the local Labor Member for Macquarie, Susan Templeman.

After a few more weeks of bargaining, WestRock agreed to a revised offer of 12 Rostered Days Off, while putting more money on the table as compensation for the reduced RDOs.

They also agreed to keep the existing flexibility clause.

National Print Secretary Lorraine Cassin said it had been a tough and lengthy negotiation.

"Through the industrial actions, however, members were able to force WestRock to put a better offer on the table."

"In the end, unity won the day."

At the time of writing, WestRock's revised offer was about to be put out to members for a final vote.

Industrial action forces Cassowary Council to raise pay offer

It's been a long time between pay rises for frustrated workers at Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

But after two 24-hour strikes, the Council has now improved its offer and a better deal may finally be in sight.

Council workers across Queensland have been suffering from the legacy of the former Newman State Government, which stripped allowances from the Local Government Award in 2013.

The Award applies to every council worker in Queensland, except for those employed by Brisbane City Council.

With the Paluszczuk Government promising to restore allowances to the Award, workers had to wait for the new Award to come into place before negotiating new agreements.

The current agreement for Cassowary Coast Regional Council expired in 2014, and the last EBA based wage increase was in July 2013.



Members at Cassowary Council went out on two 24 hour strikes to get a fair deal.

Initially the Council offered a flat pay rise of \$1,700 plus 0.5 per cent, followed by 2.25 per cent a year for the following three years.

North Queensland Organiser Peter Dalton argued that workers needed bigger pay rises to make up for

the lost ground since the former EBA expired.

"It was very hard to get any sort of movement on the original offer from the Council," Peter said.

"The two industrial actions, along with conciliation in the Queensland

Industrial Relations Commission, were pivotal in forcing the Council back to the table."

The Cassowary Coast Regional Council covers a large area south of Cairns, including communities such as Innisfail, Tully, Cardwell and Mission Beach. The region was hard hit by cyclone Yasi in 2011.

Workers took to the streets during their industrial action with 150 people marching to Innisfail Town Hall in late March to protest against the Council's inadequate offer.

At the time of writing, the Council had increased the quantum of its pay offer to \$1,700 plus one per cent, followed by annual increases of 2.5 per cent. Negotiations were still continuing over the starting date for backpay, with members seeking the agreement to be backdated until July 2018.

"Workers are angry," Peter said. "They see their bills piling up, but their wages have been stuck. All they're asking for is fairness."

New NRMA patrolmen to hit the road on EA pay

Six new roadside patrolmen at the NRMA will be enjoying the benefits of union-negotiated pay and conditions after a long campaign by AMWU members to bring road-side assistance services back in-house.

In recent years, the NRMA's road service patrolmen have been employed on contract or through an outsourcer called Club Assist.

Automobile club members, however, would have no way of knowing who their roadside patrolman is actually employed by.

AMWU Organiser Ian Sherwood said workers employed by Club Assist wear the same yellow uniforms, drive the same yellow vans and do the same work as those employed directly by the NRMA – but get paid significantly less and have inferior workplace conditions.

"The NRMA guys start their work from home, so as soon as they leave the front door they press a button on a tablet, and when they get home they press the button again and they're finished for the day," Ian said.



NRMA delegates (l-r) Tamouz Alami, Aldo Mazzucco, Martin Mifsud, Vince Brigante with organiser Ian Sherwood, celebrating a win a decade in the making.

"But the Club Assist guys have to drive to a central location and clock on before they start getting paid."

NRMA delegate Vince Brigante said the intake of new in-house patrolmen would be employed to operate across North East Sydney.

"The NRMA actually came to us and said they were looking at going in-house again to address a shortage of service providers in the North East quadrant, and could we have a discussion about it," Vince said.

"It was a really an important milestone, because we had been pushing for the NRMA to do this for eight years.

"Until now the NRMA's position has been that they wouldn't employ any more patrolmen under the Enterprise Agreement because it was supposedly 'unworkable'.

"But we've been arguing that employing people under the EA is not only better for workers, it's also better for the NRMA and its members.

"Ultimately, it's the NRMA's brand and reputation at stake, so it's in their interest to make sure patrolmen are appropriately trained and supported to provide the highest level of service to association members.

"Hopefully the employment of these new patrolmen is a sign of future practice in keeping service providers in-house."

Ian Sherwood said delegates at the NRMA had been relentless in their advocacy to bring the work back in-house, and to ensure all workers at the NRMA were getting a fair go.

"The campaign to bring work back in house was driven by the members themselves through their workplace delegates," Ian said.

"Along the way they have done an amazing job in building density and strength at the NRMA."

'It's about socialism'

Working class warrior waves goodbye to Canberra

The public gallery in the Senate can get pretty lonely sometimes, but on the night of Friday April 4, it was packed to the rafters to hear former AMWU National Secretary, Senator Doug Cameron's final speech to Parliament.

In his valedictory address, Doug spoke passionately about the people he had represented over four decades in public life as a politician and trade unionist.

"The overwhelming majority of Australians I've met have been working people," Doug said.

"They would probably describe themselves as 'ordinary Australians'. However... the working men and women of this country are anything but ordinary.

"In the main, the Australian working class are industrious, loyal [and] intelligent ... The men and women who work in factories, hospitals, on building sites and in classrooms are the people who make this country great."

Four decades of service

Officially, Doug Cameron's term in the Federal Parliament expires on the June 30, bringing to an end a decade of service as a Senator for NSW.

Doug's career in politics followed 25 years as an elected official with the AMWU.

Born in Scotland, Doug left school at the age of 15 to take up an apprenticeship as a fitter, and joined his union on his very first day on the job.

After moving to Australia in the early 1970s, he worked at the Liddell power plant near Muswellbrook in the Hunter Valley in 1975. It was here that he first became a union activist and shop steward.

In 1982 he was elected State Organiser for the

Amalgamated Metal Workers' and Shipwrights' Union, and by 1996 he had become AMWU National Secretary - a position he held until joining the Senate in 2008.

He has held a number of senior parliamentary roles, including Parliamentary Secretary for Housing and Homelessness, Shadow Minister for Human Services, Shadow Minister for Housing and Homelessness and Shadow Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships.

Taking on the big end of town

Doug Cameron has always been a fighter for working class values, and has never been afraid to take on the rich and powerful.

He opposed the dismantling of tariffs by the Hawke-Keating Labor Government, and stood up against the Howard Government's anti-union WorkChoices agenda.

He's also been a central figure in the fights for workers' rights, including the campaign to seek justice for victims of asbestos-related diseases, a consistent opponent of free trade deals that undermine the jobs of Australian workers, and a champion for the rights of migrants and refugees.

In the Senate, Doug Cameron has become known for his fierce interrogations of bank bosses, department heads, and Government Ministers.

AMWU Secretary Paul Bastian said Doug's contribution to the cause went beyond the outcomes that he negotiated and fought for as a unionist and politician.

"Doug hasn't just been a fighter for working conditions, he has also inspired others to have the courage of their convictions, and to stand up for what they believe in," Paul said.

"His legacy will be the example he set for others through his integrity, his determination, and his commitment to working people."



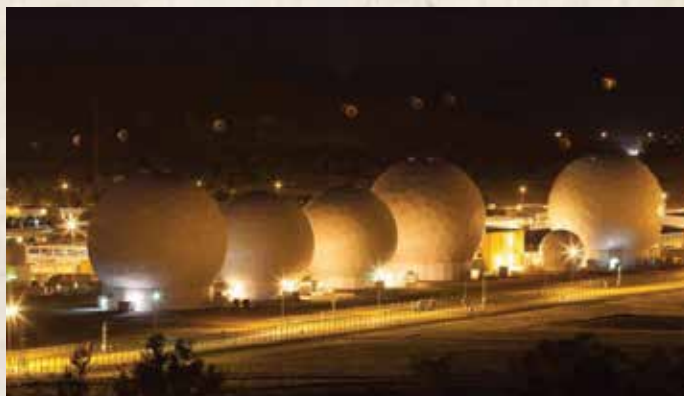
Doug has been an active member of the labour movement his whole working life. He will be missed.

RAYTHEON TOLD TO PAY UP ON REDUNDANT ENGINEERS

It's a by-word for high-powered, high-tech spy games, but Pine Gap is not just a secretive oversized telescope for spooks - it's also a workplace for over 800 people. And those workers have rights.

Defence contractor Raytheon Australia was reminded about its legal obligations recently when the AMWU challenged its decision to refuse redundancy payments to six engineers working at the Joint Defence Facility at Pine Gap.

The AMWU is seeking unpaid redundancy entitlements for the six engineers, who work in a highly specialised, niche sector.



Pine Gap may be a top secret facility but that won't stop the AMWU securing a fair deal for our members.

AMWU Industrial Officer Joshua Blundell-Thornton said a Statement of Claim has been filed, and the case is scheduled to be heard in the Federal Court in July.

"Raytheon missed out on a renewing contract to provide services for the US Government at Pine Gap, and as a result it had to lay off a number of staff.

"The company claimed that under the Enterprise Agreement it could move the engineers into other less-skilled operational roles.

"We argued that the operational roles were significantly different to the ones the engineers were employed to do, and below their level of expertise, and therefore the workers were entitled to full redundancy payments."

Joshua Blundell-Thornton said Raytheon was a big and highly profitable company.

"It's frankly outrageous that a large multinational defence contractor like Raytheon is trying to get out of paying their workers their entitlements.

"It shows that employers will take every opportunity they get to save a buck, and demonstrates why we need to change the rules."

Vale Bob Hawke

When Bob Hawke died on the May 16, the Australian labour movement lost a giant, and the AMWU lost a life member.

As President of the ACTU and later Prime Minister, Bob Hawke had a strong commitment to the core unionist principles of fairness and equality. Hawke was responsible for the introduction of Medicare, providing every Australian with access to healthcare regardless of their income. Millions of people can now visit their doctor for free thanks to Bob.

The Hawke Labor Government, working hand-in-hand with unions, introduced superannuation, ensuring that millions of Australians would be able to retire comfortably, rather than facing poverty in their old age.

Hawke was also a passionate anti-apartheid activist and stood up for racial equality.

He had the courage of his convictions and the ability to bring Australians along with him and his vision for a better country and a better world.

While we didn't always see eye to eye with Hawke, particularly on his deregulation agenda, he always had an open door for the union movement and a willingness to listen to what we had to say.



Right up until his death, Bob remained involved in the union movement, attending conference dinners, chatting with union members, giving rousing speeches, and an occasional rendition of "Solidarity Forever".

He was committed to the ideals of our movement. He was a Prime Minister

who engaged in an open and constructive dialogue with unions and our members. He shaped contemporary Australia, providing us with many of the things we can take for granted today.

He will be missed. Vale Bob.

IN BRIEF

POKER ACE RORY RAISES MONEY FOR SICK KIDS

Kalgoorlie and Goldfields Organiser Rory Cumins made a cameo appearance on Western Australia television during the annual Telethon to raise money for the Channel 7 Telethon Trust.

outstanding \$16,621 for the 2018 Telethon appeal.

Rory was one of four poker players invited to appear live on the Telethon broadcast in recognition of his great fundraising efforts.

The Telethon has been going since 1968, and in that time has raised



Rory received a certificate in recognition of his poker-playing fundraising efforts.

Rory, who is a keen poker player, took part in the 2018 Telethon Battle Of The Leagues charity poker tournament last October, along with 100 players from 10 teams.

After raising almost \$10,000 in 2017, the poker community stepped it up and raised an

over \$300 million for charities and organisations such as the Perth Children's Hospital.

Western Australia Secretary Steve McCartney congratulated Rory, and said the WA Branch was committed to fighting for a more equal and fair society industrially, politically and in the community.

Members chip in for Molly's education



Youngster Molly Osborne has had a rough time lately. Molly is the granddaughter of legendary AMWU Delegate Keith "Ozzy" Osborne, who represented printing workers at The Age for many years. Sadly, Molly lost her father, Matthew Osborne, to brain cancer late last year.

Matthew was just 28, and Molly was only three when he died.

AMWU members look after their own. That's why the Victorian Branch set about raising some money to help her achieve her dreams as she grows up.

AMWU State Secretary Tony Mavromatis presents Molly Osborne and her family with donations collected by the branch to secure Molly's future.

A raffle was held, with Organisers getting out into workplaces selling tickets to members across Victoria. A special event was also held at the Victorian Branch Office, with items donated for an auction. The AMWU contributed some cash as well.

In total the union raised \$53,169 for Molly. The fundraising effort was a wonderful display of solidarity, and greatly appreciated by the Osborne family. This money will be put into a trust account in Molly's name to help with her education in the future.

Thank you to all members who chipped in for Molly.

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DELEGATE PROFILE

Matthew Gibbons

Matthew's stepping up for respect.

The sale of family-owned Sydney printing and packaging business Hannapak to American corporation WestRock in 2017 was an eye opening moment for Matthew Gibbons.

As a printer at WestRock's North Richmond packaging plant, Matthew saw the new owners come in and immediately change the business's organisational culture. And it wasn't good.

"The major difference was the disrespect for workers," Matthew says.

"It's like night and day compared to how we were treated before. I feel like we are second class citizens now."

"The attitude from management is that if you haven't been to university, or if you don't rock up to work in a suit, then you're not as important as someone who does."

With the new owners in place, workers then had to start negotiating a new enterprise agreement. It was during these difficult negotiations that Matthew started to get worried about the future of his workplace.

"I spoke to our lead delegate about my concerns with how it was all going, and he asked me if I'd be interested in stepping up and joining the negotiation team. So I said, 'I'm happy to help, if you think I could be of use'."

"And then he asked me if I wanted to become a delegate as well, and I went, 'Yeah I'll do it.'"

"If the company hadn't been sold to the Americans, I'd probably never have thought about doing it. But now that I'm in I can really see the important role that Delegates play in negotiating for fair pay and conditions, and in defending the rights of workers."



While Matthew sees a strong future for the packaging industry, many bigger corporations are trying to put the squeeze on wages.

"The industry is consolidating," Matthew says.

"The corporations are using their market power and are lowering prices on everything to remove competition with small companies, so that has to put pressure on wages and conditions."

"It's all driven by greed. A reasonable profit should be good enough, but the big corporations are never satisfied – they have to go after every cent."

Even though he has been a delegate for just a short period of time, Matthew is already looking ahead to the next set of enterprise bargaining negotiations and thinking about how the negotiating process could be done differently.

Meeting union delegates from other worksites has given him an insight into strategies for building strength and solidarity on the shop floor and the increasing need for high union membership to ensure fair working conditions.

"Getting to see what goes on at other workplaces gives you a bit of an idea about what's possible. It's made me think about what we can do build the union at WestRock."



Worried about something?

- Are you losing interest in work?
- Are you having relationship problems?
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- Are you drinking too much or using drugs?
- Have you contemplated suicide?
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