

AMWU

News

Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union



AMWU

Summer 2020

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“People shouldn’t have to fear for their job while they’re fearing for their life.”

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Editorial

As we close in on the end of 2020, there's a lot for us to reflect on. It's not an understatement to say it's been one of the most difficult years for so many of us. For me, it's been bittersweet.

Against the backdrop of so much difficulty, struggle and fear – it has been amazing to watch our members pull together, and look after each other, their families and their communities.

I've also had the privilege of being elected and serving as your new National Secretary.

Now that I've settled into the role for a couple of weeks, the honeymoon is well and truly over – and my sleeves have been rolled up for a while.

I came in passionate about reviving our long-standing culture of member leadership.

As a Rank and File Delegate, and then an organiser, I always told our members that I represented that it was their union, and the leadership was there to carry out the day to day work of our collective vision.

As we all know, though, it's very easy to say one thing and do another.

Since I've taken up this role, I have worked to involve more of our members in the critical decisions of our union.

When our members can't be there, I behave as though my actions, words and decisions will be broadcast onto your TV – always with members in mind, and always with integrity.

I wanted to share a couple of the new initiatives we have pulled together to develop genuine member leadership at the AMWU.

Firstly, I'm excited to establish and meet our newly elected Manufacturing Campaign Committee (MCC). Twelve Rank and File Delegates from every industry we represent, across all parts of our country, have come together to lead the campaign the AMWU will run, to bring back Australian manufacturing.

It should be AMWU members, not armchair experts or paid consultants, who design how we fight to bring back Aussie Manufacturing. Members and delegates live and breathe our industries every day, and the passion of our members is well and truly represented amongst this group of AMWU leaders.

I have no doubt you will hear more from our MCC Delegates about how they will call on you to help them lead this campaign.

We have also been working hard to support AMWU apprentices in their fight to retain the "on the job" component of Australian apprenticeships - which are currently under attack from our government.

While it could have been simple enough to fire off some angry letter from my email, we instead brought apprentices from across Australia together to talk about the problem and build a campaign to fight back.

Many long-time AMWU members tell me they are worried about the next generation not being interested in unionism. For me, watching AMWU apprentices strategise about how to fight back against attacks on their trades, I am now certain the future of our union will be in good hands.

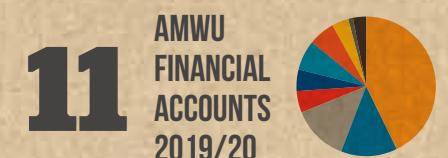
This is just the beginning of bringing back a truly member-led AMWU, and I can't wait to work with every single member and delegate to build a union for everyone.

I wish all AMWU members and their families a safe and happy new year.

Steve Murphy,
AMWU National Secretary



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**PROUDLY PRINTED BY AMWU MEMBERS
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AMWU News Summer 2020

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All information included in this publication was correct at the time of publication, but is subject to change at any time.
Please contact your union organiser for updates.

Vehicle wins

It's been win after win for organisers in the automotive and transport industry in Victoria and NSW.

Vince Pepi, Joe Cummaudo and Victoria Harper have all been successful in delivering power for workers to win new EBAs with significant pay rises, sign-on bonuses, rights for casual workers and vastly improved shift arrangements.



Workers at Autonexus realised that "United we bargain, divided we beg" is more than just a slogan.

New AMWU agreements have been secured at Dysons Bus Services Workshop, Ventura Bus and Paccar Parts with the support of their organiser, Vince.

At Dysons members will receive an 18% pay rise over four years, an end to working 10 days straight, and payment of overtime rates for weekends. The new EBA also includes a casual conversion clause that means all casuals who work at Dysons for more than six months are made permanent, a clause Vince tries to install in every EBA he works on.

Vince said: "Dysons did the right thing and recognised that our members were underpaid compared to the rest of the industry. Working 10 days straight was also playing havoc with people's family commitments, so to get a normal 38 hour week with an RDO will make a huge difference."

"We've also got good membership there too, which has grown from just seven to now more than half of all employees, thanks to the efforts of our AMWU delegates. They see the benefit of being part of the AMWU and I am sure we will get more people joining with this result."

At Ventura, workers will get at least a 3% pay rise in year one, and then at least a 2% pay rise in years two and three or AWE whichever is greater. There were also gains in allowances and great classification progression terms meaning employees progress to the pay level after a set number of service years.

Over at Paccar, Vince and the delegates secured a new four year agreement with pay increases of between 2.75-3% each year, increased notice periods for employees over the age of 45 and annual above-award increases to allowances. Vince also managed to get automatic casual conversion.



AMWU members at Autonexus with organiser Victoria.

In NSW, Victoria Harper was at the centre of an incredible new EBA at Autonexus Greystanes.

Members voted on their new EBA in September which included a \$2000 sign on bonus, yearly wage increases between 2-3%, backpay of wage increases (amounting to an additional payment of between \$700 - \$1300 per worker), new classification levels, better shift loading and penalty rate arrangements, as well as delegate paid training leave.

Victoria said: "We went into bargaining with one member. Two weeks later we turned this site to 100% density with 35 new members. We also elected two delegates and two HSRs. These workers were unstoppable when they realised just what they could achieve by working together. United we bargain, divided we beg has never been more true."

AMWU delegate Mark Foster said: "The new Agreement means that we have achieved a fairer workplace for all employees, giving them the conditions and rates that they deserve."

What's been achieved will not only put more money into people's pockets it will make their working life so much better and more secure too.

"It has given all employees a better understanding of what they are entitled to, and that their input is valuable."

Back in Victoria, AMWU organiser Joe Cummaudo helped delegates secure a great outcome at Kruegar Transport in spite of all the difficulties that COVID-19 posed in bargaining. Together, the workers secured a three-year Agreement with a 2-2.4% wage increase, a 1% increase in superannuation contributions, and an improved heat agreement.

All of these outcomes are fantastic and show what joining your union and getting organised can deliver.

What's been achieved will not only put more money into people's pockets it will make their working life so much better and more secure too. ●

Revving up for bargaining



From left: State Secretary Rohan Webb and Industrial Officer Kegan Scherf with delegates Terry Ahern and Jesse Hawk; mass meeting at Hastings in Mckay; mass meeting at Hastings in Rockhampton.

Workers at Hastings Deering celebrated their 3.25% pay rise in September, the last to flow from our three-year Agreement. The pay bump follows another 3.25% in 2019 and 5% in 2018.

Hastings Deering is the principal dealer of Caterpillar equipment across Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Caterpillar is a world leader in the sale and maintenance of heavy diesel machinery designed to service mining, construction, and agricultural operations.

AMWU officials visited Hastings Deering branches in Brisbane, Mackay, Rockhampton, Townsville, Cairns, Mt Isa and Darwin to mark the occasion and fire the start gun for the next round of negotiations.

The wage increases won by workers in the last round of negotiations come off the back of severe cuts because of the GFC and turbulence in the coal price.

"At the negotiating table last time we fought hard to begin the rebuild of members' pay and conditions – and we're not finished yet," said Rohan Webb, AMWU Queensland & NT Branch Secretary.

"It's fantastic to be out and about across so many Hastings Deering sites to meet with members, discuss their hard-earned pay rise kicking in, and listening to their concerns ahead of our next Hastings Deering bargaining campaign."

As well as a fair pay rise and continuing to rebuild conditions, AMWU members want to ensure that their union is able to represent them effectively through improved dispute settlement procedures. They want a simpler and fairer reclassification scheme that recognises the complex skills they bring to the table and they want to protect their job security.

We want to ensure that the integrity of our members' trades, and their occupations is enhanced and protected.

"Hastings Deering has a market leading reputation off the backs of AMWU members."

We want to ensure that the integrity of our members trades, and their occupations is enhanced and protected," said Rohan.

Members have also said they want to see labour hire provisions that reflect that if you do the same job, you should get the same pay.

"Hastings Deering owns its own labour hire company, Haynes Mechanical, and has a lot of labour hire workers. They are paid less, have no enterprise agreement, no job security and often perform years of service, we want to see a fairer deal for those workers."

"Our members, both at Hastings Deering and Haynes Mechanical are highly skilled and it's important they're appropriately recognised for the work they do."

"We know Hastings Deering will fight hard but there's strength in numbers, as long as we stand together, we'll see a result as good as three years ago." ●



Getting to work on family violence

It was when Ross Kenna went into bat for a colleague being disciplined by management that he came face to face with the reality of how family violence can impact on our workplaces. Ross's experience led him to spearhead the AMWU Food Industry Committee campaign for a gold standard family violence leave clause to be included in every food industry agreement negotiated by the AMWU in 2021.

"Unbeknownst to the company, the member was in the middle of a family violence crisis, causing the absenteeism," said Ross, a Delegate at McCain in Ballarat.

"She was trying to make her two young kids safe; she was in the middle of changing phones - things you don't think about, and the company couldn't get her, she'd missed about seven shifts.

"She was in big trouble but still the stigma meant she couldn't tell people outside her family."

"I'll give McCain's their due - once they found out they worked through me until she got herself sorted, they let her access her long service leave.



Ross and his daughter with Women's Committee Convener Melinda and National Councillor Nelyn marching at International Women's Day earlier this year.

And he thinks he can see a way to make that difficult situation just a little easier for a family violence survivor.

"We're pushing to get the AMWU's new family violence leave clause in every food EBA negotiated from 2021," said Ross.

"It means someone in one of the most vulnerable situations of their life can access 20 days paid leave that doesn't come out of their personal or annual leave.

Ross took the Food Industry Committee's campaign proposal to the AMWU's Women's Committee and OH&S Committee, who both gave their enthusiastic endorsement.

Long-term AMWU Delegate Tracey Davis, who works at the Department of Defence and is a representative on the AMWU Women's Committee says it's overwhelmingly women who experience violence in the home.

"Given the food industry has a high proportion of female workers it's essential employers recognise the

inclusion of the model clause will not harm their profitability but will provide much needed time to escape family violence," said Tracey.

"Employers need to run with this by putting posters on the walls, including messages in toolbox meetings along with other WHS issues to get the message out that it's not okay.

"Society is moving on and we need to see the end of family violence now!" said Tracey.

An important new feature of the clause is there is no burden of proof - you simply apply for the leave.

Workers can take the first four days off without documentation, on the fifth day they need an affidavit or AVO or similar document.

"I remember my colleague didn't want the company to read the police reports or evidence she had, so I had to verify the contents to the company," said Ross.

"That's not good enough - it impacted me more than I thought it would to be honest.

"This new clause makes it easier.

"People say people might lie - but would you? Would you tell your work colleagues that? No member would fake a family violence claim just to go to the beach.

"This takes away any ambiguity, it means people don't have to fear for their job, while they're fearing for their life.

"At McCain we have a new clause in our 2019 EBA - it's not this new AMWU gold standard clause - but it does give survivors 10 days leave, five without documentation, so it's a pretty good start."



The campaign was endorsed by the National Women's Committee, pictured at their last face-to-face meeting last year.

Ross points out AMWU members who are living through family violence can also access the union's hardship fund. This allows members who need urgent help to access financial support when they need it most.

"I was very proud to move a motion at the last AMWU National Conference on behalf of food and the Victorian branch that enables AMWU members to access our hardship fund if they are experiencing a family violence crisis.

"This motion was developed by food industry rank and file members and is an awesome outcome for AMWU members."

Ross believes delegates need more training to deal with family violence issues, something that is also provided for in the model clause.

"I was very naive in relation to family violence; I was wholly unprepared to deal with what was a delicate situation.

"And in my attempt to assist the member I could have made her situation worse.

"I could have helped her a lot more.

"As a delo I have a fair idea what to do next, it if was an industrial issue I'd go to our agreement and then the award, if it was a health and safety issue I know how the Health and Safety Act works and how to speak to the regulators and stuff like that.

"I am very proud I get the opportunity to represent our members but, in this case, I felt I could have done much better.

"A good comrade and I then attended some family violence training about a year later.

"This training was incredible and opened my eyes to just how big an issue family violence is.

"The training also taught me how best to deal with similar situations that may arise in the future."

"It means someone in one of the most vulnerable situations of their life can access 20 days paid leave that doesn't come out of their personal or annual leave.

Tracey Davis believes we can all do something today to end family violence.

"I've brought up my children to understand you treat people with respect - as you'd like to be treated yourself," she said.

"Anyone who's not hearing this at home, needs to be hearing it at work." ●



AMWU Women's Committee members Jessica, Steph, Tracey, and Jo support the campaign for better family violence clauses.

"They didn't give her anything she wasn't already entitled to, mind you."

Ross's colleague was able to escape the relationship, move states, and start a new life, still working in the food industry and is a proud member of the union.

But Ross never forgot the insidiousness of what he'd come face to face with.

Equal pay for equal work

When workers at Mesh and Bar heard similar businesses were paying their unionised workers 10% more they came together, joined the AMWU and built a plan to put the pressure on the boss. As a result, they won an unprecedented pay rise.

“For nine days members set up out the front of their workshop in Glendenning in Western Sydney – they were out the front every day, rallying, chanting, even busting out some TikTok dance moves, anything to let management know they were upset at being duded,” said AMWU organiser Rowan Kearnan.

“Spirits are high, the guys are holding their heads high, they’ve never seen a 5% increase there, it’s brought them together.

“They stood up together and said it wasn’t good enough – and now they’ve got a good result.”



As well as a \$500 sign on bonus and a 5% pay bump in the first-year workers at Mesh and Bar won 3% pay rises in each of the final two years of the agreement.

Mesh and Bar make reinforcing steel used in construction to give concrete slabs their strength. Workers bend, cut, and weld the steel for use in projects like Westfield’s re-development of the Centrepont shopping centre in Sydney’s CBD.

Workers at similar businesses such as Ausreo in nearby Wetherill Park, and Natsteel in Prestons were paid much more than those at Mesh and Bar.

“They printed off the AMWU agreements from these other workplaces and compared rates for production operators for example, workers at the other companies were paid more,” said Rowan Kearnan.

“Understandably these workers weren’t happy about that.”

Nadim Ali, an AMWU Delegate at Mesh and Bar has been with the company for eight years.

“We’ve been getting paid lower than industry standard for the last 6 years... people should stand up, speak up, and also support one another,” said Nadim.



Another AMWU delegate at Mesh and Bar is Motootua Richardson.

“I’ve got four kids and we are struggling at this time. We have to pay bills, and renting and buying food... we want to get a better future, not only for us, but it’s for our kids when they grow up,” he said.

The result shows the power of union membership, solidarity and collective action. ●

“They stood up together and said it wasn’t good enough – and now they’ve got a good result.”



AMWU members at Mesh and Bar, led by delegates Nadim and Motootua (pictured left with organiser Rowan) stood together for a better deal.



Standing up to a bully

AMWU member Anthony Boekhorst not only took on his bullying boss, he also had the courage to take on the might of Rio Tinto and Monadelphous.

It’s a huge task to stand up to a bully and it can take a physical and mental toll. But this residential fitter’s tormenter has now been found guilty of assault.

Throughout his ordeal the AMWU has provided support and advice, ensuring that Anthony wasn’t alone facing off against these industrial giants.

Anthony has been compensated by Monadelphous after a lengthy process, and is now considering civil action against Rio Tinto for failing to provide a safe working environment.

Anthony’s problems began about eight months into his new job at Rio Tinto’s site at Karratha, when his supervisor began to play a series of practical jokes on him.

It seemed harmless enough at the beginning, but when Anthony had an accident at home and obtained a doctor’s work clearance from his GP to return to work, things took a more sinister turn.

His supervisor not only questioned the validity of his doctor’s clearance, he also tried to contact his GP, and the hospital. Anthony’s supervisor implied he did not believe him and that he thought the clearance was not genuine.

This was when Anthony made a decision to raise a dispute with his employer, Monadelphous, who is the main contractor to the Rio Tinto-run site. To his dismay and disgust, it was simply brushed under the carpet.

The bullying escalated when Anthony urgently needed time off due to a family crisis.

Anthony said: “My supervisor told people he visited my house as he thought I had just gone fishing. I don’t know why he didn’t believe me and I have never understood what he had against me. Until working for Rio, I ran and operated a very successful business, working in the mining industry for over 30 years. I had heard about the culture at Rio Tinto, but was now experiencing it.”

Things came to a head when his supervisor sounded an air horn (used for safety purposes in rail warning for trains) in his ear at close range three times and filmed it on his phone to share with other workers.

“I lost some of my hearing that day and now suffer from severe tinnitus. It was bad enough that he did it once, but three times, and he laughed whilst he was doing it.”

The AMWU was asked to step in and demanded that Rio Tinto, who employed the supervisor directly, and Monadelphous take action against the supervisor.

Once AMWU organisers discovered that he had been given only a mild warning and not been demoted/sacked, the AMWU informed Rio Tinto they would be escalating matters as this was totally unacceptable.

AMWU State Organiser Gary Carozzi said: “Monadelphous handballed it completely and as for Rio Tinto, well it was obvious that they had decided to stand by their employee (the supervisor) rather than look out for a contractor who had been clearly wronged and bullied not to mention the safety breaches involved.

“If they had done the right thing and acted decisively, things may have concluded there, but we advised Anthony to take it further and go to the police. The AMWU will always try a different approach to get the right result.”

Anthony took some time off work to recover and get some help. The police took the case seriously and acted accordingly. His supervisor pleaded guilty to endangering a life and health and safety of a person in October and was given a one year community service order. He has now also left the Rio Tinto site.

Every worker is entitled to a safe workplace. If you are experiencing bullying at work, get in touch with the union.

AMWU members and their families can also access the AMWU’s free, 24/7 phone counselling service AMWU Care. ●



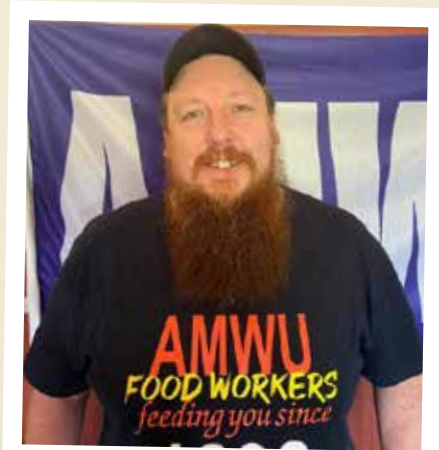
With AMWU support, Anthony fought back against corporate giants Rio Tinto and Monadelphous.

It’s a huge task to stand up to a bully and it can take a physical and mental toll. But this residential fitter’s tormenter has now been found guilty of assault.



A reckoning for McCain

The McCain factory in Ballarat now has even stricter health and safety measures in place thanks to AMWU delegates who secured two major wins in the last three months.



McCain Delegate and HSR Ross Kenna is keeping his workmates safe.

McCain has now been forced to put more staff on the ground after the regulator agreed with the AMWU that health and safety was being compromised in the pursuit of profits. More health and safety representatives have also been installed on crews in the fry plant area. AMWU delegate and McCain worker Ross Kenna said the WorkSafe ruling was one of the most significant wins achieved in the last 10 years. "To have the regulator agree with us is rare, but they not only agreed with us that the extra work load being forced onto workers was excessive they also raised a number of other manual handling issues. "McCain is a global company that is used to getting away with much more lax health and safety standards in the US and Canada. They think they can do the same here but forget that here in Australia, and in Victoria in particular, we have some of the toughest health and safety standards in the world.

"Overseas people working in the food industry die on the job, it's highly dangerous work and we need to keep a very close eye on operations across McCain at all times." In the US it's been estimated that food industry workers have a 60% higher rate of occupational injury or illness than workers in other industries. At McCain, Ross and other HSRs became deeply concerned when management upped the tonnage in the robotic packing area. Tonnage soared from 15/16 tonnes an hour to around 30 but McCain refused to put on any any extra workers. Ross said: "We spent the last six months trying to sort this. After getting nowhere with the company, we issued a PIN notice (a provisional improvement notice). This gave a warning to McCain that they had a choice - to either improve conditions and comply with our order - or we would go to the regulator." McCain decided to contest the PIN and WorkSafe was called in. He said: "This is an incredibly busy area that deals with many thousands of tonnes of products. Workers here are highly skilled and have to run four or five interfaces on the computer as well as doing manual handling including the stacking of boxes weighing around 15 to 16kg. The machinery is high speed and there is also forklift truck activity so this is a highly dangerous area. Workers were so worried and stressed about the extra work load that they were calling in sick so we had to address this." After visiting the work area, WorkSafe agreed with the AMWU and issued its own PIN notice which led to McCain adding a new worker to the area. Ross said: "You would think that the regulator would be on the side of workers all the time, but they often side with the company. It's really rare to get WorkSafe to issue a PIN and back the union, so this really was a major win for us."

Ross has also been busy securing more HSR coverage in the fry plant area. Of the four crews on rotation, only half had a HSR on board which Ross says was untenable. He said: "We need to be across every area. Workers need to get to know and trust their HSR and be able to go to them with any concern so we can get things improved quickly." Management at first tried to resist the attempt to get more HSRs installed, and even refused to have Sarah Ross, the Victorian OHS Officer on site. It seemed the only path to getting things improved was to head



to the courts, but after a change in management in Ballarat, McCain agreed to meet AMWU's demands and the two shifts with four rotating crews all now have a HSR. The AMWU also has a full time Health and Safety department at McCain - which Ross says is essential. "Health and safety on the whole here, is pretty good, but like all companies, management focus too much on profits over the safety and well-being of their staff. Every workplace accident or death is preventable." The important role that HSRs play cannot be overstated - workplaces with a dedicated HSR on site are 50 % safer than those without. If you are interested in becoming a health and safety rep you can find out more by heading to the AMWU website. ●

AMWU Financial Accounts 2019/20

Please find below the Union's financial summary for 2019/20. The Union's full accounts can be found on the internet at <http://www.amwu.org.au/the-union/rules-policies-and-elections>. If you would like a free printed copy of the full Financial Reports, please call the AMWU Helpdesk on 1300 732 698 or email amwu@amwu.org.au

How are these financial reports prepared? Our financial year ends on the 30 September. At this point, the Union's external auditors scrutinise our accounts and provide a report on their compliance with Australian accounting standards and the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act. Following their adoption by the National Council, they are made available to members and lodged with the Registered Organisations Commission. The same process applies to the accounts in each state.

What information is included in these reports? The reports include: Income and expenditure; commercial relationships; the members of our governing bodies; your representatives on the industry superannuation funds; the salaries of our highest paid officials and significant detailed information on the accounts of the Union.

How are my dues protected? We have a proud tradition of good governance and financial management, supported by solid policies and procedures, and overseen by the National and State Councils, the Audit, Risk & Investment Committee and the Union's external auditors.

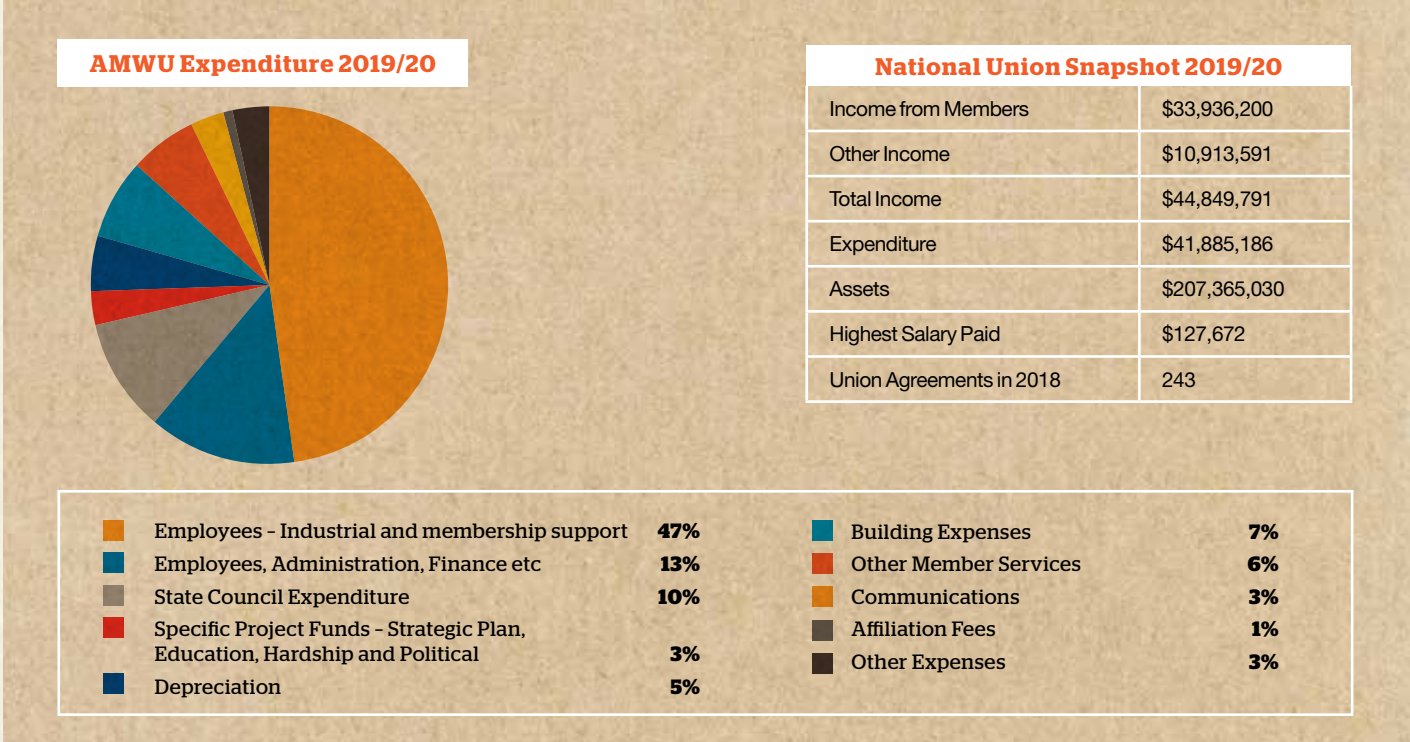
We have strict controls around credit cards, purchasing, conflicts of interest, and gifts and hospitality. Our Union's Officers also attend Union Governance & Financial Training.

What happens to your Union dues? All AMWU membership dues are paid to the National Union and money is allocated to the State Branches according to budget policy. Your Union dues are listed as Contributions in our accounts. A significant portion of membership dues go to support the Organisers and Staff whose job it is to provide industrial and bargaining support to members and to build the Union by encouraging new members to join. The Union also employs a number of legal, education, communications and policy specialists to defend the interests of members and a range of people to keep the union functioning in finance, IT and asset management etc. Your dues also support a range of direct member services and products including the Helpdesk for industrial support, AMWU Care for 24hr counselling, and a range of insurances such as emergency transport and journey cover where it's needed. The Union also allocates \$2.10 per quarter for each member to the Political Fund to ensure that we engage in national and state political debate on behalf of our members and to maintain our affiliation with the Australian Labor Party. **Does the Union make money in any other way?** Yes, our Rules provide that when an Officer represents members on an external Board, Directors fees are paid directly to the Union. The Union also earns money from financial investments in shares and property.

In addition, the Union has a 49 per cent share in Wageguard, an Income Protection firm, to ensure that these policies operate in the best interest of members. All income from this investment is used to fund products and services for members.

How does the Union make decisions on investment? All investment decisions are taken on the recommendation of the Audit, Risk & Investment Committee which engages professional, external advice and support. The investment portfolios comply with the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investment and all Officials and Officers are subject to the AMWU Conflict of Interest Policy.

Is the Union in a good financial position? The Union is in a good financial position, despite significant decline in some of the major manufacturing industries and a subsequent loss of members in recent times. Your National Council has been making prudent investment and expenditure decisions appropriate to the circumstances. An operating surplus of \$2,964,605 for the 2019/20 financial year was achieved. In support of a significant restructure of the Union over the past two years, the National Conference authorised a deficit operational budget for 2019/20. Despite this, the overall financial position of the Union improved during the year due to better-than-projected membership dues income, an increase in external rental income, and the payment of a higher-than-average investment dividend from Protect which is a redundancy trust covering a number of our members working in construction in Victoria.



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DELEGATE PROFILE

Anka

It was love that brought 19-year-old Anka Perkovic to Brisbane, Australia on Christmas Day 1973 from the former Yugoslavia.

"It was a rocky start," remembers, now husband, Ivan.

"That was the year Cyclone Tracey flattened Darwin on Christmas Day, and Brisbane got flooded a few weeks later too, I'm sure Anka was wondering what she'd got herself into," he laughs.

Anka had kept in contact with childhood friend Ivan, who had left a few years before, and soon the keen pen pals were reunited in Brisbane on that fateful Christmas Day.

And when Anka began work it was second nature for her to join her union.

"I remember my Dad used to work 48 hours a week," she said.

"People forget unions fought so we are safe at work, see more of our families, and get four weeks holiday a year."

Anka retired in October after 23 years at aluminium louvre window manufacturer Breezway.

"Even at our workshop in Coorparoo, it's only been in the last five- or six-years earmuffs, glasses and other PPE was compulsory – people forget workers used to retire with industrial deafness," she said.

AMWU Organiser Scott Stanford says you'd never die wondering what Anka thought about an issue.

"If you were in an enterprise agreement negotiation, she'd be the one telling the employer what she



DELEGATES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

thought, she'd be setting the agenda for them to follow," he said.

Due to her experience as a delegate Scott says Anka often took up issues on behalf of workers first, and only involved the union if an issue became too hot.

This year Anka did have to call Scott for backup.

"Four months ago a girl was called into the office, without being told she could have a support person, and all the managers ganged up on her," she said.

"I knew I was right and the bosses were wrong so I advised her to take stress leave and then told management how unfair the situation was.

"They ended up retracting the warning letter and then retrained management on how to deal with issues on the shop floor."

Anka only has one tip for aspiring workplace leaders – be forthright and strong, but never rude or untruthful.

Not that Anka is wasting much time worrying about workplace issues anymore – she's loving spending time with her five kids, seven grandkids and husband of almost 50 years, Ivan. ●



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