

AMWU

News

Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union



AMWU

Autumn 2022

Our Union: 170 years strong

TOOHEYS LITE ON THE

DEMOCRATIC
RIGHTS OF
WORKERS.

INSIDE

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Manufacturing
launch

Aussies demand
homegrown subs

Rail manufacturing
returns to WA



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Editorial

One of the very few silver linings from the last few years is that the AMWU has been proven right.

Over decades, we have told anyone who would listen how critical a big local manufacturing sector is to the success of our country - that making things in Australia is the key to good, secure jobs and a decent life for all workers.

It's a great shame that it took a global pandemic for people to really start paying attention, but this is an opportunity we can't waste.

We know community attitudes have shifted, and that there is a recognition that we need to retain our sovereignty and rebuild our self-sufficiency.

It's also become easier to see through the tired rhetoric that said it was decent wages that were costing us our manufacturing sector. There are too many examples of high-wage manufacturing powerhouses for that to hold any water – it's simply not true.

We know that just because an idea is popular, doesn't mean it will translate into action by politicians or investment by private capital.

We needed to build a campaign to seize this moment, and we are doing that with the Support Aussie Made campaign.

So, what are we fighting for?

1. To rebuild our manufacturing industry with good union jobs;
2. To protect our skills and improve the opportunities for quality training;
3. To deliver secure jobs and fairness at work.

What do we need to win it?

1. An investment fund to rebuild manufacturing, and procurement policies that preference local jobs;
2. National qualifications and fully funded TAFE;
3. Decent laws that give workers back their power.

There's a lot to fight for. New jobs, skills that are fit for purpose, and stronger industrial power goes hand-in-hand. There's no point winning one without the others.

We have been pushing all political parties to get on board and sign a pledge committing them to our campaign and we've made some progress.

With a \$15.2 billion manufacturing fund commitment by Labor, backed up with commitments to rebuild TAFE, skills and training, and supported by commitments to change our IR laws, a win for our members would be to change the government at the next election.

The 2022 election is an opportunity to translate the wave of public support for our industry into real investment from future governments.

This won't be just about 'getting Labor elected'. We have an important role to play, up to and beyond the election, to make sure that these commitments turn into reality.

We won't be calling this a win until we see the money being spent on the ground, union jobs being delivered, and our members experiencing change for the better at work.

As a union, we will be making some serious noise to have 2022 be the year of the manufacturing election.

Solidarity.

Steve Murphy
AMWU National Secretary



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AMWU News Autumn 2022

The AMWU News is authorised by the National Secretary of the AMWU, Steve Murphy.

“Lost for words.”

Aldo wins HSR of the Year Award

Aldo Mazzucco thought he was being pulled into a meeting at the AMWU offices in Granville to talk about work health and safety legislation with his workmates.

But when AMWU National President Andrew Dettmer walked up to a podium and started talking about the importance of work health and safety and how critical health and safety representatives (HSRs) are, the pin started to drop for Aldo.



Aldo is all smiles after receiving his award.

“Our union is stronger because of the HSRs on the job.

“We want to recognise our HSRs and the critical work they do, so it was recommended that they be honoured with an award to recognise our outstanding workplace leaders.

“One stood out among the rest,” said Andrew.

Aldo’s workmates spoke highly of their HSR in his nomination.

“Aldo is always concerned about our patrol’s safety – and always keeps management in line when it comes to following their own procedures.

“He isn’t afraid to drop a PIN on them for unsafe work practises – he has closed down an unsafe battery hub until it was made safe and has got NRMA vans off the road until loose equipment was secured for safety.

“He never stops making our workplace safer, especially during COVID,” they said.

“Representatives are what make our union work,” added AMWU’s National Work Health and Safety Coordinator Dave Henry.

“I am lost for words,” Aldo said, grinning from ear-to-ear, when he was handed the certificate that confirmed in writing he had been awarded the first ever HSR of the year award.

“When are you ever lost for words,” one of his workmates yelled out.

“I don’t think I deserve it to be honest with you, it’s just something that you do.

“Years ago Dave Henry said to me that safety is up to the individual – it’s a safety rep’s job to make sure the bosses do their job. And those words, I’ll never forget.

“I am just doing my job and I just make sure I help other safety reps do their job if they’ve got a problem.”

Aldo’s job is an intense one, he’s devoted over 20 years to helping out Aussies in distress on the road as an NRMA roadside mechanic in Sydney.

“Years ago Dave Henry said to me that safety is up to the individual – it’s a safety rep’s job to make sure the bosses do their job. And those words, I’ll never forget.”

Aldo was once recognised in the NRMA newsletter for helping out a mother of three in distress.

Aldo got to work, logged on, and received a call-out to assist a woman whose car had mysteriously switched off while she was driving.

When he arrived, “I could see that she was really stressed,” he says. “I did my checks. I noticed she had three kids in the back of the car who were jumping around like little monkeys. They were all excited that the NRMA man was there with his flashing lights.”

The family car needed to be towed but this raised an issue: the tow truck could not carry the young ones.

With her husband interstate on business, the mum had no choice but to begin the desperate search to find a friend or family member to come to their aid.

Approaching his day with compassion and generosity is an integral part of not only who Aldo is but his work.

“She really hit the panic button,” says Aldo. “She started going through her phone, ringing people one by one, but nobody could come to get her kids.”

Finally, a relative who lived more than an hour’s drive away offered to come and get them. In the meantime, there were three very hungry little faces in the back seat of the car and their mum had no way to get them any dinner.

So, Aldo came up with a plan. “I said to her, ‘I just need to go get a drink, I’ll be back soon,’” he says.

“I went over to McDonald’s and bought the kids little burgers, chips, nuggets, apple juice and I bought the mother a drink.”

It was a simple gesture that made a powerful impression. “As soon as the mum saw the food she burst into tears,” Aldo says. “She insisted she wanted to pay for the food but I said, ‘I didn’t do this for you to pay me. I did this because I wanted to do it and it’s just something that people do.’”

Approaching his day with compassion and generosity is an integral part of not only who Aldo is but his work.

However, there were a couple of disappointed faces when it was all over. “My kids were upset that I had bought someone else’s kids Maccas,” he says with a laugh.

The AMWU had nearly 80 nominations for the HSR of the year award and we’re looking forward to more later this year. ●

170 years strong:

what are your favourite memories of our proud history?

Our union is the oldest in continuous existence in Australia, built from 170 years of working-class struggles with justice at its heart for both workers and their communities.

We began in 1852 with the newly formed Amalgamated Society of Engineers, but the modern-day AMWU is a rich tapestry made up of 72 unions, covering the full spectrum of manufacturing workers, who have come together over the years to become something more resilient.

Today our members create, make, and maintain everything from sweets to submarines, while building on the hard-fought wins of those that have come before us to ensure the continued future of local manufacturing industries, in the fair and equitable country we want to be.

To celebrate this incredible milestone, we want to hear your stories.

What are the moments of solidarity that you look back on and make you smile? Which mentors and comrades have had the biggest impact on you? What did your industry look like when you first joined the union? Which campaigns are you proudest of? Which losses taught you the most? What makes you proud to be union?

Send your stories and photos to: communications@amwu.org.au

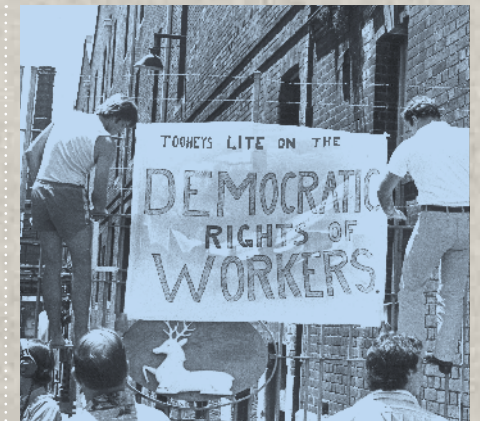
No anecdote is too small to share, we’d love to hear it all!

We’ll be celebrating the stories and history of our great union throughout the year. ●

Our union is the oldest in continuous existence in Australia, built from 170 years of working-class struggles with justice at its heart for both workers and their communities.



Toyota’s Port Melbourne production line manufactured the company’s one millionth vehicle in Australia. Published in ‘The Metal Worker’, November 1992.



In the early 1980s, brewery workers in NSW fought for a 35-hour week in the industry. At one point, Tooheys dismissed its entire Sydney production and maintenance staff after they refused to sign on to work according to the existing award. Photo taken at Broadway, NSW (date unknown).



Printers march on Consolidated Press, November 1982.



Mike Jackson, co-convenor of Garden Island, cutter and editor of ‘The Dockside’, and AMWU delegate Mark Pearce in November 1985. When Mark looks back at his time welding at Garden Island in the 80s, he recalls how strong they were on work health and safety, “I think they were years ahead of their time.”



Workers at the Streets ice-cream factory in Minto lead a successful national boycott, Streets Free Summer, after their corporate owner, Unilever, tried to cut their pay by 46 per cent. Pictured: AMWU members at PLP Glendinning throwing their support behind the campaign, November 2017.



Abi and Rieland, apprentice fitters from across the country, met with then Minister for TAFE, Simon Birmingham, after he made disparaging remarks about funding for TAFE subsidising “everything from energy healing to basket weaving”, June 2018.

Mates in Manufacturing Launch

The AMWU has taken a big step towards improving workers' mental health and helping prevent suicides with the launch of Mates in Manufacturing.

More than 3,000 Australians die from suicide and more than 65,000 Australians make a suicide attempt every year.

It is a leading cause of death for people aged 15 to 44 years, and about 75 per cent are men.

Based on the successful Mates in Construction program, which now has more than 250,000 participants in the industry, Mates in Manufacturing aims to remove the stigma of seeking, accessing and providing mental health support for workers across the manufacturing sector.

It will deliver suicide awareness programs and critical workplace training that focuses on peer-to-peer support, along with case management and referrals to appropriate professional services.

AMWU National Secretary Steve Murphy says the union saw a wave of suicides across several industries in 2019 and resolved to do something about it.

"Mates in Manufacturing has been a long time coming," Steve says.

"Back in 2019, our union had to deal with a number of high-profile suicides that were happening across our industries.

"Our leadership decided to work with other unions and industry heads to support workers through it. Not only to honour those that we've lost, but to support workers who need it now."

Steve says a number of initiatives, such as R U OK? Day, have been set up to reduce suicides but, while they are to be praised, they are not enough.

"Once a year we said 'Are you okay, mate?', and we all answered, 'Yeah,' he says.

"But if anybody said anything but 'yeah', we didn't have the skills to do what was needed, and that was to look after each other."

Mates in Manufacturing aims to give workers those skills.

The pilot program – now running at 12 sites and being supported by employers – will see volunteers in manufacturing workplaces comprehensively trained onsite to keep at-risk workers safe until clinical assistance can be organised.

Volunteers will be supported by qualified professionals while at-risk workers will be referred to appropriate services, including medical intervention, workplace employee assistance programs, or counselling.

It's a program Mark Pearce, a boilermaker with UGL Unipart in Sydney, one of the pilot sites, wishes was available 30 years ago when he lost a young workmate to suicide.

Mark's mate, then aged just 22, had struggled with depression after being injured in a car accident, and sometimes spoke about "ending it all".

"We tried to talk to him, to tell him it was going to be alright," Mark says. "Next thing, we find out he's taken his own life.

"I remember going to the funeral and then afterwards wondering whether there was anything more we could have done.

"If this sort of program existed at the time, it could have made a difference."

AMWU National President Andrew Dettmer spoke to workers at the launch of the pilot project at UGL in December last year.

He says Mates workplace training programs have been found to reduce suicide rates.

More than 3,000 Australians die from suicide and more than 65,000 Australians make a suicide attempt every year.

"Our industry across Australia is going to be better for it," he says.

"There will be flow-on effects to families and the community as a result of this, and our workplaces are going to be healthier and a whole lot more supportive.

At the launch, Steve encouraged all workers, regardless of their position or title, to participate in the Mates training.

"These are going to be skills for life.

"We've got to support Aussie made, we've got to support Aussie workers, but mostly we've got to support each other.

"That's how unions were born and it's one of those values that we have never lost." ●



Aussies demand six new homegrown subs

A majority of Australians believe our navy should acquire up to six new conventional submarines to make up for the delivery gap created by the Morrison Government's scuttling of the French sub deal for a new nuclear deal with the US and UK, a new UComms poll has revealed.

The polling also found a whopping seven in ten Australians believe six conventional submarines should be built here on our own soil at our sovereign shipyards in Adelaide.

Under the previous French deal, we would have had the first of 12 new subs in the water by 2034, but under the new arrangement, we won't see a single new submarine operational until 2040 - almost 20 years away.

With growing geopolitical uncertainty in the Asia-Pacific region, it is vitally important that Australia can supply its own defence vessels locally. A lack of programming certainty in our defence manufacturing enterprises jeopardises both this essential industrial capability and our defence forces themselves.

Without a robust shipbuilding industry, Australia will be completely reliant on other governments and foreign suppliers to deliver the capabilities that our navy needs, including maintenance and repairs.

If Australia doesn't have the ability to keep its own defence equipment in good working order, we don't have a sovereign operational capability.

The government is investing hundreds of billions of dollars in defence, and taxpayers must see a return on this investment, part of which should be the development of an Australian-owned and operated defence industry.

This secures Australia's doorstep, boosts the economy, produces jobs, training and skills, and encourages Australian businesses to do research and development.

The Morrison government must now decide whether its priorities have changed.

Many in the industry want the government to stick to the priority it set out in creating a sovereign industrial capability in Australia and not just export opportunities for the UK and US.

Our existing fleet of Collins-class submarines are set to be completely rebuilt between 2026 and 2038, with the first retiring in 2038.

This creates a gap between the time the Collins-class submarines go out of service and the launch of new submarines.

That's why we need to start building up to six conventional submarines now.

A conventional submarine build will bridge that gap, without it our shipbuilding skills will be lost forever and they will not return.



The primary focus of the Osborne Naval Shipyard is the design and build of complex submarine programs for the Royal Australian Navy.

Workers in the industry want to keep their sector afloat.

Without immediate political action, our defence capability is weakened, our national security is put at risk, and jobs are lost.

It's not just ordinary Australians who want to see work on six new conventional submarines begin immediately - military experts agree that defending Australia without a lot more submarines will be almost impossible in the coming decades.

John Blaxland, a professor of international security and intelligence studies at the Australian National University agrees we need more submarines.

"I agree that we need to double down on the number of submarines - we need to get cracking on them," he says.

It's not simply on the water where we will be caught short if we delay delivery of new subs to 2040: by then we'll have a crucial skills shortfall on land.

And given it has been mooted our new nuclear subs may in fact be retired former US Navy submarines we buy 'off the shelf', we may have no capacity to fix them in future years.

This has Australian shipbuilding experts like Chris Mooney, co-convenor of the AMWU Shipbuilding Committee, biting their nails.

He believes if we haven't been designing and building subs here in Australia we won't have the tradespeople and other specialists to repair or sustain our navy's future fleet of subs.

"We thought we had a commitment from the government for a pipeline of secure work over decades, rather than the previous ramp up followed by job losses at the end of projects like the Anzac-class frigates," he says.

"We now find our shipyard workers in Adelaide facing another valley of death (loss of skills in the industry between projects), which makes it that much harder to maintain our sovereign capability to be able to design, build, and sustain our navy fleet into the future.

"I know lots of workers in Adelaide, with young families and mortgages, who set themselves up to work in an industry thinking they have secure work and now they're threatened with losing everything.

"Not only do we need the government to commit to building up to six new conventional subs immediately, but to also commit to building the eight nuclear subs here in Australia: our survival as a nation may depend on it, I can't put it any blunter than that," Chris says. ●

Australia – world leaders in electric car manufacture?

Australia has the lithium, steel, and car component industries needed to become a world leading electric car maker but only if we act now, a new report by The Centre For Future Work has found. And there's more.

As the world's largest exporter of lithium, we have huge potential to make not only electric car batteries but also the giant rechargeable batteries vital for renewable power distribution.

"We could be the Saudi Arabia of lithium batteries," says Dr Mark Dean, the report's lead author.

Places like Collie could easily become battery manufacturing powerhouses.

Coupled with our large car component manufacturing sector in Adelaide, Geelong and Melbourne, the report finds Australia is well placed to begin production of electric cars in the next few years.

"Australia enjoys advantages other nations would die for: rich reserves of lithium and rare earths, strong industrial infrastructure, a highly skilled workforce, powerful training capacity, abundant renewable energy options, and untapped consumer potential," says Dr Dean.

"And contrary to popular belief, we wouldn't be starting from scratch, thanks to the resilience of our remaining automotive manufacturing supply chain, a surprising amount of auto manufacturing work - including components, specialty vehicles, and engineering - still exists here."

Some small electric vehicle manufacturing is already happening - a Melbourne-based company has started 100 per cent Australian production of electric trucks and a Western Sydney-based firm is manufacturing electric buses from entirely Australian-made products.

AMWU National President Andrew Dettmer warns governments must act now if we are to cash in on the coming global electric car and battery boom.

"The first step is to establish an Electric Vehicle Manufacturing Industry Commission and then offer global car manufacturers seed money and tax breaks," Andrew says.



AMWU State Secretary, Steve McCartney, and AMWU organiser, Dan Hannah, visited members at the Kemerton Lithium Project construction site in the South West, WA.

Members have been at the forefront of discussions around future and emerging industries in the area, like lithium processing and battery component production, which have included a push for advanced skills for workers to service these industries.

"The Federal Government can then drive demand by being the first customer - they could do it with the stroke of a pen by requiring all new government vehicles to be electric and Australian made."

"Simultaneously, the government could use tax incentives to encourage firms involved in the extraction of key minerals - primarily lithium and rare earths - to beef up their manufacturing capacity so they can supply an emerging Australian electric vehicle industry.

"What we do in the next five years could set up Australian prosperity for the next five decades," he says.

The world electric vehicle market is growing rapidly as the globe's biggest companies attempt to decarbonise to combat climate change and keep the global average temperature increase as close to 1.5 degrees as possible, under international agreements.

In 2021, electric car sales more than doubled from the previous year to 6.6 million, representing almost 9 per cent of the market. China accounts for over 50 per cent of all electric cars sold, and there is strong growth in the US and Europe.

"Australia enjoys rich reserves of lithium and rare earths, strong industrial infrastructure, a highly skilled workforce, powerful training capacity, abundant renewable energy options, and untapped consumer potential."

The report said capturing opportunities in the electric vehicle and battery energy storage supply chain could create 34,700 jobs in Australia by 2030, while global demand for batteries has been forecast to increase tenfold to reach \$151 billion by the same year.

Andrew says this is Australia's once-in-a-generation chance to be more than a 'rip and ship' economy.

A worker-led industrial transformation of the economy with electric vehicle manufacturing at its core would result in an advanced society founded on economic, social, and environmental justice.

"If we did this right, we could even bring these new industries to regions which are transitioning away from carbon-intensive industries," Andrew says.

You can find the report - *Rebuilding Vehicle Manufacturing in Australia: Industrial Opportunities in an Electrified Future* - on The Australia Institute's website.

The report was produced by the Carmichael Centre, part of the The Centre For Future Work. ●

Rail Manufacturing Returns to WA

Electric and diesel railcar assembly has begun again in Perth after a 25 year campaign by the AMWU.

A new \$46 million custom-built facility at Bellevue in the city's east will begin turning out Australian-made rolling stock in coming years, with their first job delivering 246 railcars required for Perth's Metronet.

Next up, six diesel railcars for the Perth to Bunbury 'Australind' service. Over \$1.25 billion dollars of government projects have already been committed to the greenfields site.

The state-of-the-art, 180-metre long building is the result of a pledge signed by the AMWU and the then state's Labor opposition in 2015.

"It's very important that this has come back to the Midland area, this is just the start of our economic recovery by bringing manufacturing back to Western Australia."

For 80 years, the Midland Railway Workshops built and maintained trains, until shutdown by a Liberal government in 1994.

The new facility is just around the corner from the old workshops, which are now heritage listed.

"The former Midland Railways was a manufacturing hub - they manufactured everything right down to their own bolts - that was destroyed in the mid 90s by a Liberal government which was anti-worker, anti-union and anti-manufacturing," says AMWU organiser, Renee Portland.



AMWU organiser Renee Portland, WA Premier Mark McGowan, and WA Assistant State Secretary Glenn McLaren at the opening of the Bellevue Railcar Manufacturing Facility.

"These Liberal governments wanted to privatise or sell off everything and hundreds of people lost their jobs, and all that skill and knowledge was lost overnight.

"It's very important that this has come back to the Midland area. This is just the start of our economic recovery by bringing manufacturing back to Western Australia."

The first workers on site are enjoying generous pandemic leave and income protection provisions well beyond standard sick leave after the AMWU recently concluded negotiations with central contractor Alstom, which runs the new Bellevue facility.

The new agreement also ensures apprentices will comprise at least 10 per cent of the workforce, providing future generations with a start at the fresh facility.

"They have committed to employing apprentices - which is a big deal for the AMWU. As part of their business plan, they are training the next generation - not just relying on other

businesses to do the heavy lifting when it comes to training tradespeople," says Renee.

"They have committed to employing apprentices - which is a big deal for the AMWU. As part of their business plan, they are training the next generation - not just relying on other businesses to do the heavy lifting when it comes to training tradespeople."



WA State Secretary Steve McCartney and Renee Portland checked out a full-size model of the new C-Series trains to be made in Bellevue Midland by AMWU members as part of the new Metronet fleet.

"Alstom already has a rail manufacturing facility in Ballarat which is heavily unionised with AMWU members, so it wasn't foreign to them negotiating with a trade union.

"The new agreement includes cultural leave for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people - the local area has great significance to First Nations people, so it was really important to the union to make sure the agreement reflected that.

"Alstom have obligations to use more and more local suppliers as they build capacity.

"There will be increasing local procurement, building those supply chains to support the rail industry."

Kulbardi, a Western Australian Indigenous company, supplied furniture for the new facility.

Knorr-Bremse will supply air-conditioning and brake components from WA.

Aerison, a WA-based company with a fabrication facility in Forrestfield, will provide cab structures, batter boxes, and fuel tanks.

"This is an example where you can see our ongoing Aussie made campaign bearing fruit," says Renee.

Last year Rio Tinto committed to using local suppliers for its purchase of 100 iron ore rail cars, on the back of the state government's support for the local manufacturing industry. ●

Solidarity the key to success at Scania

Solidarity by AMWU members at truck company Scania convinced management to come to the party during its push to introduce a national agreement for heavy vehicle technicians and sales and parts advisors.

Scania had agreements covering Queensland and NSW, but with Australia-wide operations, it proposed an agreement to cover all states.

Negotiations got off to a rough start after the company refused to guarantee that existing and new workers covered by these agreements would not be worse off.

"We had to apply to the Fair Work Commission for a scope order. Otherwise, the two biggest states would have been excluded from any national deal," Assistant National Secretary Dave Smith said.

"Following a conciliation hearing on the matter, we agreed to put on hold our application while the parties held discussions," Dave says.

"It's a good win that will see Scania parts workers, technicians, yard hands, and service advisors receive improved pay and call-out and standby rates."

"These discussions were assisted by members in Queensland and NSW making their displeasure known to the company and placing pressure on Scania to guarantee their wages and conditions moving forward.

This pressure saw Scania move away from its original position of grandfathering existing employees' conditions while introducing lesser conditions for new employees.

"The agreement is a great example of what can be achieved when workers are united."

Heavy vehicle mechanic Teddy Pahany is a delegate at Scania's Pinkenba centre in Brisbane.

"They started with a push to a national agreement and were going to grandfather a lot of conditions," Teddy says. "We really didn't like that.

"We put in a scope order, and spoke to delegates in NSW, who looked ready to take industrial action. Their agreement was long overdue.

"It seemed that if we didn't hear anything good from the company we were probably going down the same path."

But Teddy says that on hearing it was facing united union action, Scania "completely flipped the script".

"It really turned around when they had an inkling NSW and Queensland were going to stand up to them," he says.

"It was uncanny timing. They gave us a whole draft document they would commit to, and the only thing to still be grandfathered was long service leave, which was unavoidable, as each state has different legislation.

"Otherwise, they came to the party. The pay rise was acceptable, they increased our allowances, and there was no more 'new employees getting hit on and old employees getting better'. Everyone is the same."

The AMWU secured a three-year agreement, with a first-year increase of 3 per cent and 2.5 per cent in

the second and third years, or an additional 0.5 per cent if CPI is greater. All members received back pay from 1 July 2021, and NSW members got an additional nine months back pay as their agreement had long expired.

Other wins include 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave per annum, five days paid union training leave per annum, 13 weeks long service leave after 10 years' service, 52 weeks of accident make-up pay, and RDOs in states that want them.

Allowances were also increased, with a standby allowance of \$180 a week, a \$115 on-call payment for each call-out and a minimum payment of two hours of double time, and four weeks redundancy per year of service, with no cap.

The company also agreed to include a union rep in discussions around the possible implementation of paid parental leave.

Dave acknowledged the work of AMWU officials and delegates and said it was great to see new members had joined the union through the campaign.

Daniel Matthiesen, a Scania parts supervisor in Perth, became a delegate through the bargaining process.

"I had not been involved in this kind of thing before. I thought I'd watch, go to meetings, be an observer," Daniel says.

"But I got more and more involved. I thought, this

is pretty important. Most of my colleagues do not know how this kind of thing works, so if I get to know more I can help them out."

Daniel is glad he got involved.

"It's a good win that will see Scania parts workers, technicians, yard hands, and service advisors receive improved pay and call-out and standby rates.

"We are much better off than under the old agreement." ●



AMWU shop steward George Grkinic (left) and bargaining rep Glenn Shaw at Scania in Sydney.



AMWU shop steward Daniel Matthiesen and member Annette Black at Scania in Perth.

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DELEGATE PROFILE

Laura Cheney

Laura Cheney is an A MWU delegate at Aloc's alumina refinery in Pinjarra, WA.

At the start of the year, Laura was voted up as the first woman convenor in AMWU history at Alcoa, Pinjarra.

Laura lives in Harvey, south west of Perth, but grew up on a farm in Boddington before starting an apprenticeship as a mechanic with Alcoa.

She joined the union a few years back, on completing her trade, and now works in the site's vehicle workshop, which has about nine staff including an apprentice.

"Alcoa has strong union membership," Laura says.

"I joined the union when I first qualified about two years ago and became a delegate about a month ago.

"One of our mechanics retired and I replaced him – otherwise the vehicle workshop tends to get forgotten about," she says with a laugh.

Laura says being in the AMWU has many important benefits.

"You get extra job security in case you accidentally muck something up," she says.

"It gets you good conditions and pay rises.

"And I've found all of the stewards are decent people who are always happy to help." ●



Laura onsite at Alcoa.



Deputy convenor Laura (left) pictured with AMWU convenor Jim Bennett (right).



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