

AMWU News

Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union



AMWU

Winter 2022



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Editorial

They say if you fail to plan, you're planning to fail.

Almost two years ago, we started to build a plan, led by rank-and-file members, to secure our members' jobs into the future by making things here and to build workers' power to win.

We wanted to:

- Rebuild Aussie manufacturing with decent, secure, union jobs
- Protect the integrity of our trades and skills
- Deliver better rights for all workers.

We called it: Support Aussie Made.

When the pandemic hit and we saw public support for Australian manufacturing strengthen, our union seized the opportunity to escalate our campaign, with the federal election as a clear target. We put manufacturing firmly back on the national agenda and turned broad community and industry support into commitments from political parties.

We knew that people wanted Australia to be a country that makes things again, and we now have the mandate to make that happen.

As the dust settles, and workers breathe a sigh of relief that the Morrison Government - and their agenda of keeping wages low, jobs insecure, and workers worried about their future - has been defeated, we have a lot of work in front of us.

But before we get on with the job, it's important to take a moment to celebrate, and also to say thank you.

Firstly, thank you to our six member organisers who were the face of Support Aussie Made, and who took our fight for manufacturing to marginal electorates around the country: Sam Facey, Keith Lang, Michelle Owen, Cam Brady, Catherine Whitely, and Rachael Hynds. These activists were out in our workplaces and communities as well as calling fellow AMWU members to talk about our campaign and build support.

To every delegate who gave up their time, held a mass meeting, or passed a petition around at work, as well as every member who participated or had a conversation with family or friends, I am so proud of your efforts in making history this election.

I also want to acknowledge the work of our National Manufacturing Campaign Committee who planned and designed the Support Aussie Made campaign in their own time because they care about the future of our industries. AMWU delegates led the campaign from the beginning - everything from the logo design and campaign demands to the election strategy was determined by rank-and-file delegates.

I believe that our campaign was such a success because it wasn't just full-time officials making these arguments to politicians, it was our members from the factory floor talking to each other, their communities, and their political representatives.

While it's exciting to be part of a bigger conversation about our members' demands, this is just the beginning. We have a job to do to ensure politicians make good on the promises that delivered them a seat in Parliament.

Our campaign to support Aussie made doesn't stop until Labor's election commitments are delivered in our industries and our workplaces.

You can be sure that we will hold the Labor Government to account, to make sure they govern with integrity, compassion, and practicality.

As we get this next part right, and start rebuilding manufacturing in Australia, future AMWU members will have all of you to thank.

You'll be hearing a lot more from us in the coming months as we get into it.

Solidarity.

Steve Murphy
AMWU National Secretary



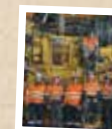
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AMWU News Winter 2022

AMWU News is authorised by AMWU National Secretary Steve Murphy.

Swapping the shop floor for the campaign trail

As the Support Aussie Made campaign switched gears for the federal election, a handful of rank-and-file members came off the shop floor to campaign full time as member organisers. It was something new for our union, but it was crucial that we kept manufacturing firmly on the election agenda and workers at its centre.

Member organisers spent weeks having critical conversations with other members and people in their communities, engaging candidates to sign on to our pledge committing them to action on rebuilding local manufacturing, and activating delegates across the country to bring the campaign into their workplaces. Take a look back at this historic campaign through their eyes.

"I will be heading back to my workplace with a change of government and increased passion for ensuring we improve working conditions."



Falling just a few weeks before the election, there was plenty to hit the streets for at this year's May Day marches.



Gordon Entwistle and Gary Carozzi made sure WA voters knew who supported Aussie made.

Name: Samantha Facey
State: Tasmania

Key focuses: Talking to members about the campaign, listening to their concerns, getting Support Aussie Made pledges signed by candidates, and changing the government.

Campaign highlights: Meeting new people and getting to talk to members about their issues.

I also had people I'd never met before, from other unions and Labor, tell me that they knew my name and that I was doing a great job. It was lovely to hear.

Describe your campaigning in a few words: It was amazing! Absolutely fantastic opportunity which I will appreciate forever. It's made me realise even more that I want to work full time in this area.



Sam with Unions Tasmania Secretary, Jess Munday.



AMWU delegates at McCain in Smithton won the award for campaign of the year at this year's May Day Awards in Tasmania.

An important learning: That we have some incredible people in our union who go above and beyond for us all.

Something that made you proud: Watching every single one of the member organisers grow over the seven weeks and the relationships we've formed as a team. I look forward to watching what they get up to in the future.



McCain Smithton workers, Craig, Kyle, and Sam, know how important manufacturing jobs are to regional communities.

A conversation that stands out: So many amazing conversations, and I realised that members talked even more when they realised I was just one of them.

A new skill you developed: Gaining more confidence to go outside of my comfort zone. I had never door knocked or called random numbers to talk to people before, now it just seems like a normal thing to do.



Labor candidate for Braddon, Chris Lynch, and Senator Ann Urquhart both pledged their support.

Name: Cam Brady
State: Victoria

Key focuses: I was allocated the Corangamite and Wannon electorates. The moment I heard the Keppel Prince story, the Wannon campaign became personal and a real inspiration to do whatever I could to help.

Campaign highlights: Besides the stunts and the fun, one would be having the privilege to work next to my sister, Rachael, and watching her grow as an activist, and Gilbert Wilson, Labor candidate for Wannon. I'm privileged to call them both friends.

Describe your campaigning in a few words: At times challenging, at other times quite depressing, frustrating, fun, but ultimately, I'm full of

gratitude for all experiences afforded to me, and the environment of support and solidarity we worked in.

An important learning: That the fight never ends, regardless of the outcome of the election, and with the people that have been involved in this campaign, it's clear it won't stop.

Something that made you proud: I'm proud of everyone involved in the campaign for the way they have gone about their business, and reaffirmed and strengthened our solidarity.

What will you take back to your workplace: I'll be going back to my workplace determined to be a thorn in the company's side.



Member organisers and the Labor candidate for Wannon joined Keppel Prince workers to deliver a clear election message.



Cam and Libby Coker had great conversations with the community about Support Aussie Made.



The community was right behind our campaign.



Worker mass meetings were an important chance to talk about what supporting Aussie made means for workers and their communities.

Name: Keith Lang
State: NSW/ACT

Key focuses: Local manufacturing, secure jobs, union presence and growth, skills development, and affordability for workers.

Campaign highlights: Sharing our campaign message with fellow comrades and supporters at the May Day march in Sydney.

Describe your campaigning in a few words: Long, arduous days that were rewarding.

An important learning: Our campaign resonates with membership and beyond, in part because it's rank-and-file led. Workers are solving the problems of the world daily in conversations out on the shop floors; with this input, we can not only change a government but the world.



Keith getting the crowd behind our Support Aussie Made campaign at this year's May Day march in Sydney.



Federal Member for Macquarie, Susan Templeman, signed our pledge at a visit to WestRock.

Something that made you proud: Seeing my fellow member organisers tackle challenges head on, becoming comfortable being uncomfortable, the camaraderie of the team.

A moment that stands out: Visiting members in the electorates of Page and Richmond who have been affected by natural disasters. Our members are resilient, and the pride in the work



Early morning handouts at train stations were a regular part of the campaign.

that they do and their skill shines through as they rebuild.

What will you take back to your workplace: I will be heading back to my workplace with a change of government, and increased passion for ensuring we improve working conditions, and an open ear to take in the ideas and concerns from the shop floor, then deliver on them.



Campaigning in Gilmore got some help with train builders from the Hunter coming down with a message for local voters.

Name: Michelle Owen
State: Victoria

Key focuses: To promote conversation, activism, and awareness of the importance of prioritising local manufacturing, and elect a government whose policies align with that.

Campaign highlights: The undeniable support from our members, delegates, and officials.



Michelle had an incredibly high success rate in her persuasion conversations!

Describe your campaigning in a few words: Empowering, supportive, united, educating and rewarding.

An important learning: Ask questions and show interest. When I explored someone's response to a particular issue or voting preference, we often found a common interest and goal in ensuring growth and job security in Australian manufacturing.



The Federal Member for Ballarat, Catherine King, is now Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development.

Something that made you proud: A high percentage of successful persuasive conversations, due to in-depth and balanced discussions (that and I love a chat!).

I was also proud to hear that several members remembered my Support Aussie Made speeches from events and went on to have conversations with others and get our petition signed.



Michelle talked to 10 newly minted AMWU delegates about the campaign when she attended a new delegates course in Ballarat.

A conversation that stands out: A discussion with a member who was so enthusiastic that he put me on speaker so his work colleagues could hear and pass on our message to Support Aussie Made through the election.

A new skill you developed: Making TikTok videos! I also found the narrative training gave me a better understanding of how to navigate persuasive conversations and speeches to make an impact and leave a lasting positive message.

What will you take back to your workplace: A reaffirmed faith in the power of unity. An example of the strength of solidarity and camaraderie.

Name: Catherine Whitely
State: WA

Key focuses: Engaging branch delegates and members so that they are enthusiastic about a win for Zaneta Mascarenhas and Labor in Swan, and that their work was a core part of her campaigning. Getting signed pledges to support Aussie made for secure jobs.

Campaign highlights: Speaking to members and delegates across the state about what job security means for them and why it is so important that governments prioritise secure work.

Describe your campaigning in a few words: Fun, edifying, and rewarding.

Something that made you proud: Watching one of our delegates, Dylan, speak to his

comrades over Zoom about his experience campaigning and encouraging them to do the same! This was one of Dylan's first experiences speaking as a leader in front of an audience about campaigning and it was memorable to see him take that step.

A conversation that stands out: Conversations with members about the importance of job security

because it allows them to spend more time with family. Every conversation like this reminded me that we're campaigning to make people's lives better and that this work extends beyond the workplace.

A new skill you developed: Building the case for union activists to work on political campaigns or support candidates who have their interests at the heart of their work. ●



The new Member for Tangey, Sam Lim, with Catherine.



AMWU member and newly elected Member for Swan, Zaneta Mascarenhas, with fellow member Daniel Mathieson on election day.



Catherine with AMWU organisers Alan Lindsey and Madi Sarich-Prince.



Unions WA Secretary Owen Whittle and AMWU member Blayne Larobina were part of the crew handing out on election day.

2022 National Conference Wrap Up

The AMWU is Australia's oldest union. This year, we celebrate our 170th year, a legacy that is founded on and strengthened by building power through rank-and-file engagement with members across all our industries.

Every two years, elected rank-and-file delegates from across the country come together for National Conference. As a governing body, National Conference is responsible for critical decision-making and is required to act as a voice for our membership, across every state and territory, from cities to the regions, for women, young workers, and the future of our industries.

The timing of National Conference was delayed due to COVID-19 and finally went ahead virtually, rather than in-person.

This is an overview of the key issues raised by and resolutions to come out of National Conference that affect you.

Note: the terms Conference and National Conference are used interchangeably.

SUPPORT AUSSIE MADE

The AMWU's Manufacturing Campaign Committee was established in 2020, comprised of rank-and-file delegates, with the aim of developing political, industrial, and community campaigns. The outcome of that work is the Support Aussie Made campaign. This campaign is by and for our members, working in the interests of our workplaces and the future of our industries.

Through this campaign, we want to deliver strong union jobs, re-establish quality and certainty of trade competencies, re-investment in Australian manufacturing, effective trade agreements, and sustainable practices within the industry.

Conference unanimously supported the Support Aussie Made campaign beyond the recent federal election to ensure those elected are held accountable for delivering on commitments made.

It's crucial that we build a strong work health and safety culture in which everyone contributes to a safe and healthy working environment.

INDUSTRIAL RIGHTS

Conference knows that industrial relations laws in Australia no longer support workers. The system is broken and these laws must be changed to tilt the scales away from employers that have used them to attack workers' hard-fought pay and conditions.

Our Award System has been eroded for years, leading to poor wage growth; recent court cases have laid bare the shortcomings of Australia's industrial laws and the failed experiment of enterprise bargaining that prevents workers from making any significant gains.

National Conference supported the continuation of our strategic campaigning on and advocacy for changes to the industrial framework to give all workers a fair go.

THE NEW ECONOMY

From the Hunter and Latrobe Valleys to the Collie Coalfields and the Bowen Basin, the AMWU is determined to ensure the interests of members are at the forefront of conversations and decisions around renewable energy. Workers deserve respect and protection, and to be able to meaningfully participate in decisions that are made about the future of the industries that employ them. Workers need to be supported in the resources and power generation industry across the country.

Conference supported the continuation of our campaign to win a future with decent, well-paid union jobs for energy workers and their communities.

WOMEN IN OUR UNION

Women members in our union make up around 9 per cent of our total membership, a figure that remains consistent despite efforts to recruit and advocate for more women leaders across the union.

Conference issued widespread calls to all AMWU governing bodies to encourage women delegates and members to participate in union structures. Furthermore, Conference resolved to support women to continue to grow within our union by ensuring their industrial needs are adequately represented in our bargaining, campaigning, and industrial agendas, and by removing the barriers women face in accessing senior and elected roles within the union.

Women need unions and our union needs women.

Conference supported the continuation of our campaign to win a future with decent, well-paid union jobs for energy workers and their communities.

WORK, HEALTH & SAFETY

Conference recognised that exposure to silica dust and the impacts of mental health issues are two very real hazards that members may experience in their workplaces.

The AMWU will be ramping up campaigning and education on these issues to provide genuine support for members and their families whilst combating the stigma surrounding mental health.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY

In 2022, International Workers' Memorial Day coincided with National Conference. Marked globally on April 28, the day gives us an opportunity to reflect on how to prevent workplace deaths, injuries, disease, and illness. Importantly, it's also a day to remember those who we have lost to a work-related injury or illness. In 2020, almost 200 workers in Australia were killed at work, according to Safe Work Australia.

It's crucial that we build a strong work health and safety culture in which everyone contributes to a safe and healthy working environment.

Conference continues to endorse the hard work of our union to embed health and safety culture in how we organise our workplaces.

Together we can ensure all workers arrive at and leave work safely.

National Conference will be held again in 2023. ●

Integrity and compassion make for an outstanding delegate

AMWU delegate Chris Harper, who received the Austin Vaughan Outstanding Delegate Award at the recent Queensland State Conference, has been praised as a man of integrity, compassion, empathy, and tremendous resolve.

Chris began his apprenticeship at Callide Coal as a diesel fitter in 1980 and joined the union in 1981, something that was never in doubt.

"I come from a strong union background," he says. "My father was a unionist with the FED&FA at the local power station, so I had those values instilled in me.

"You never achieve anything in life by being an individual, but being part of a collective such as the union opens the door to achieving many great things."



Chris and the D Crew at Callide Mine.



The Callide Mine Branch were right behind C.U.B workers in their 2016 dispute.

Chris became a delegate in 1989, which he says gave him access to union education. "It helped getting mentored, it gave me a good solid grounding on the roles and responsibilities of a delegate, what you can do in the workplace, how to go about negotiating, and how to defend your members."

It also taught him not to be shy. "If something's not right, speak up. If you don't know something, ask a question, and if you don't get an answer, try to find one or someone who can give you one."

Chris says his biggest objective is to act with integrity and in the best interests of members.

"If you say you're going to do something, do it. If asked a question you don't know the answer to, don't bullshit, say you don't know but will find out and get back to them.

The AMWU, he says, has given him confidence to have a go, something members respect.

"They love to see you have a win, but more importantly they want to see you have a go."



Marching with fellow delegates Leigh Robe, Steve Bell, Tim Fuller, Robert Shanks and Lenny Ryan.



Back in 1983, Chris was just completing his apprenticeship but was already a member of the union: "I had no hesitation joining as a second-year apprentice."



In 2021, Chris had notched up 40 years of continuous membership. He's pictured here with AMWU official Phil Golby.

Chris cites Callide's recent EBA as one of the union's best wins, establishing minimum full-time numbers - including 30 permanent maintenance roles - for the life of the agreement.

The union also fought for and won a dispute resolution procedure that contains an arbitration provision after several previous unsuccessful attempts.

Chris is an AMWU State Conference Delegate, State Council Delegate, National Conference Delegate, and National Council Delegate. He's also been a Queensland Coal Shop Stewards delegate since 1991 and its secretary since 1999.

These roles have given him a voice for his industry and its workers and their communities. ●

Print workers take on media giant

Supporters across the country rallied behind WA print workers when belligerent management at Kerry Stokes's Seven West Media locked out workers twice in the span of just a few months, the second lasting 73 days.

The enterprise bargaining process at the suburban Perth plant that prints the West Australian and Sunday Times had already been dragging on for more than two years.

As well as attacking redundancy conditions, management "wanted to cut pay, holiday loadings, weekend loadings, it added up to a \$20,000 a year wage cut," says delegate Gary Small.

"They kept putting up proposals that were progressively getting worse.

"When we took a four-hour stoppage at the end of last year to meet with members, as we are a 24/7 production plant with people rostered all over the place, they locked us out, which was pretty horrendous."

That lockout was soon suspended and bargaining recommenced, but at the start of this February, workers voted down another shameful proposal and were again locked out.

It wasn't easy but 102 AMWU members, as well as members from the ETU and CFMEU, remained staunch throughout the ten weeks. Really, though, they just wanted to get back to work

"We did a lot of campaigning and got out into the street. We used a lot of social media as mainstream media was too scared to pick it up," says AMWU organiser Alan Lindsey.

"And the workers remained strong throughout, backed by the union and union movement. Otherwise, they couldn't have done it."

The AMWU sought intervention in the Fair Work Commission and came up with a bargaining position to put to the company, which workers then voted up.

While there was some compromise on redundancies, which are now capped at a year's pay, workers have kept all shift and holiday loadings, and received a 2 per cent pay rise, after seeing no rise for the previous two-and-a-half years.



"Seven West Media made \$222 million profit in the first six months of the year, so it's not as if they can't afford it," says Gary.

The West also received \$45 million in JobKeeper.

"We never saw any of that, they pocketed it while they stood us down six hours a week for 11 months. Managers were laughing and openly calling it 'revenue raising'.

"They told us everyone is in this together, but we found out management and staff were back on full pay and conditions after just three months.

Clockwise from top left: On a recent trip to Perth, ACTU Secretary, Sally McManus, made sure to thank some of the brave WA Newspaper workers for their solidarity over the previous few months.

The four-hour stoppage in December 2021 was the first industrial action at the worksite in 17 years. Taylor Small said the members were "out here for the right reasons."

Workers took the fight to the advertisers that had made the company so profitable.

Maintenance members at Premier in Collie donated from their own fighting fund to keep workers on the grass.

After more than 70 days, AMWU members got the news they were going back to work.

"And the workers remained strong throughout, backed by the union and union movement. Otherwise, they couldn't have done it."

They only took us off the stand down the week before they told the ASX that they'd made \$340 million in profit," Gary explains.

Alan says it was disappointing such a bitter dispute came about.

"These things create a divide forever and a day."

But not between the workers on the shop floor. ●

“Mateship is our best tool”

Looking after your mates and demanding a fair go are principles union activists can use to ensure respect and drive positive change in the workplace, says former National Secretary Doug Cameron.



Doug is only the fifth AMWU member to be conferred with this honour, which was first given to Laurie Carmichael 10 years ago.

“Mateship is really about working on common problems and understanding as an individual you’re much weaker than when you work collectively with your mates,” Doug says.

Doug would know. In May, he received a life membership in the union, recognising his more-than-50 years of service to Australian workers. He still has advice for those at the coal face, including to “never forget where you came from.”

“Mateship is such an important element in Australia and in the development of collectivism, a combination of strong individuals operating in the collective interest is a powerful force for the common good.”

After first arriving in Australia from Scotland in 1973, Doug and wife Elaine soon moved with their young daughters to Muswellbrook. Doug was to take up a position as a maintenance fitter at the nearby Liddell Power Station.

When they arrived at their fibro Electricity Commission house in the depths of winter, they were dismayed to find a cottage that had been lying empty and badly vandalised. But in one of his first tastes of mateship and unionism, Australian style, the young family got another house in decent nick through his union.

“Mateship is such an important element in Australia and in the development of collectivism, a combination of strong individuals operating in the collective interest is a powerful force for the common good,” he says.

He would need all that strength when he stepped into the workplace.

“It was full on conflict at the power station between management and workers,” he says.

“The industrial relations culture in the Electricity Commission was poisonous, with hard-nosed, uncompromising management facing up to a tough, unionised and determined workforce.

“My union career took off as a result of standing up for myself and helping my mates in the face of a management team schooled in the master-servant relationship.”

“The station manager was an imposing ex-rugby union second rower with no neck who ran it like the army, he thought he could stand over anybody.

“He would call me ‘boy’, (I was young then) I told him ‘Don’t you call me boy!’, I got stood down without pay for three days over that,” he laughs.

Doug’s talents as a leader were soon recognised and he was elected as the AMWU organiser for the Hunter Valley and New England region.



“The fact that it’s black and white shows you how long I’ve been at it,” says Doug, pictured here at AMWU National Conference.

“I was a one-man band in tiger country with members in hospitals, the department of main roads, I even had a blacksmith member on a farm in Moree,” he says.

“During my time, the Bayswater Power Station was built and 16 coal mines came online so I was constantly negotiating site agreements, and there were always plenty of blues especially over the food in the construction camps,” he remembers.

“During this time a couple of our members were killed in workplace accidents, that was tough.

“Another hard job was telling members at the Barraba asbestos mine near Tamworth their job could potentially kill them. The boss was telling them white asbestos was safe, it was blue asbestos that was bad, they even had company doctors tell them it was okay.



In 2003, a 110-day strike by mainly migrant women workers at the Morris McMahon can factory in Sydney ended with a victory for workers. Doug is photographed at a press conference during the dispute, also attended by then Workplace Minister Tony Abbott.

In 1986, after 11 years in the bush, Doug and his family returned to Sydney after he was elected Assistant State Secretary.

It was a time of change with the Hawke and Keating Labor governments bringing manufacturing employers and unions together to study industry best practice. Globalisation had arrived and was forcing a transition from the old economics of domestic industries protected by tariff barriers.

Australia had to move to new export focused internationally competitive outfits. Together, Doug and others like prominent businessmen Dick Warburton from DuPont drove improvements in productivity, quality, and on-time delivery in the manufacturing industry.

Sadly, this was not to last with the Howard Government’s changes to industrial relations once again pitting workers against bosses with many taking the easy way out by focusing on short term cost cutting and absolute management prerogative.



Doug and his wife Elaine attend a May Day march.

It was also in the Hawke and Keating years that enterprise bargaining was introduced. It resulted in members in the same industry, who once bargained on a national basis, now isolated to the enterprise.

“Enterprise bargaining is not working effectively or as originally designed.

“Once you’re educated and organised, then you have the ability to influence outcomes.”

It has weakened the movement due to the complexity of the rules and subsequent governments capitulating to business demands for ever more constraints on industrial action, right of entry, and access to members.

“This neoliberal onslaught has weakened the union movement’s capacity to bargain collectively.

“When the American and Canadian unions have bargaining rights far in excess of ours, then there’s a big problem! They don’t have the restrictions we have here, they have access to pattern and industry bargaining with no artificial constraints on what can be included in an agreement,” he says.



Palm Sunday Peace March in Sydney with Labor MPs Tanya Plibersek and Linda Burney. Rallies in the 80s were energised by the anti-nuclear movement of the day, drawing hundreds of thousands nationally. More recent years have focused on Australia’s treatment of asylum seekers.

Speaking of the here and now - what about the workplaces of 2022? What is Doug’s advice for union delegates, shop stewards, and activists?

Doug says union delegates are most effective when they are respected on the job as skilled and professional workers, which makes them natural leaders able to speak for, and negotiate on behalf of, workmates.

The union’s education program for future workplace leaders is crucial - encouraging delegates to be widely read and develop good political awareness.

“Once you’re educated and organised, then you have the ability to influence outcomes,” he says.



After being elected to the Australian Senate in 2007, Doug was succeeded by Dave Oliver then Paul Bastian (pictured right) as AMWU national secretary.

“Mateship is really about working on common problems and understanding as an individual you’re much weaker than when you work collectively with your mates,” Doug says.

“Be a mindful militant - don’t back the boss into a corner, consult with your workmates to ensure they understand the approach, strategy, and desired outcomes,” he says.

But what about his workplace mates? Does he keep up with any of them?

“Julius Roe, Dave Oliver, and Paul Bastian were fantastic mates to have around me in my union career. I still keep in touch with them and unsung AMWU staff like Jock Blair who kept the union administration running.

“I was so fortunate to have been mentored and influenced by great Australians like Laurie Carmichael, John Halfpenny, Bob Adamson, and George Campbell.

“The Carmichael Centre has recently been founded to undertake research and pay respect to Laurie’s legacy.

“One research paper recently found we could be the Saudi Arabia of renewable batteries, the Mercedes Benz of electric vehicle manufacture.

“Onshoring renewable industries is a no-brainer with our lithium, cobalt, and residual car manufacturing skills.

“I hope the Albanese Labor Government gets it started as a priority,” he says.

“Be a mindful militant - don’t back the boss into a corner, consult with your workmates to ensure they understand the approach, strategy, and desired outcomes.”

“The heart and soul of the union is our rank-and-file members and delegates; without them nothing can be achieved.”

Current National Secretary Steve Murphy says he is proud Doug Cameron is now a life member.

“With mates like Doug, there’s no limit to what we can achieve,” says Steve. ●

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DELEGATE PROFILE

Tim Ring

A dose of workplace boredom set Tim Ring, a fitter-machinist at the Nyrstar Hobart zinc plant, on a path to become an active delegate and HSR.

Tim began at Nyrstar in 1987, joined the AMWU after finishing his apprenticeship, and became a delegate about nine years ago.

"I wanted to qualify as a rigger, so I could use a chain block to lift things safely. The boss said no. I asked to be qualified to do basic scaffolding. The boss said no.

"I thought, 'what can I do, I've been doing the same old things for the last umpteen years?'. They only had one union delegate, so I thought I might have a crack at that and as HSR."

In the 90s, even before he was an HSR, Tim started doing lighting audits off his own bat.

"Safety is everyone's concern, but I was sick of working in the dark, turning up to pull a pump apart and having to use a head lamp or a torch," he says.

"One of the first audits we did identified 200 faulty lights. The only reason we got them repaired is that I put red and white tape on them with a tag saying they weren't working. The bosses didn't like it when management from other areas came down and saw all the tags."

More recently, Tim worries that the plant, being more than 100 years old, contains a lot of legacy asbestos.

"The company recently got rid of what was called a mercury storage shed. But it took 18 months of me whingeing and taking photos to get the building removed," he says.

"And there's plenty more to clean up. Every time we have high winds – which we often do in Tassie – I go round to the usual spots to see if any more asbestos is laying on the ground."

Tim represents about 33 members and is constantly out to sign up more, but a massive turnover in the past two years means Nyrstar has lost 24 of 60 tradespeople.

"A new round of enterprise bargaining is about to kick off. We have a new HR principal who is listening to us, which is a nice change, so it will be interesting to see how negotiations go." ●



McCain delegate Sam Facey, Mark Spyker from Australian Super, and Tim were all at this year's Union Tasmania May Day Awards where AMWU delegates picked up two awards.



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