



**CFMEU FFPD NSW DIVISIONAL BRANCH
THE FORESTRY & FURNISHING
PRODUCTS INDUSTRY WORKERS UNION**

Solidarity is Strength



NSW BRANCH

The Timber+Furnishing Worker

Newsletter - Spring 2006



Message from the Secretary

Levy to Provide Better Protection for Members



There has never been a time in Australia when the rights of working Australians have been under greater threat. The Federal Government's attack on workers and unions is unprecedented. Over the past few months we have developed a complete plan to protect CFMEU members and their families.

The NSW CFMEU FFPD Protection Plan will involve new negotiation strategies, increased union training and more information for members.

Most importantly, we will establish and maintain a permanent support fund that will only ever be used to organise, legally defend members or provide support to members during industrial action. No member wants to take strike action, but more and more it is employers who are locking workers out during disputes. But

no matter how you got into it, when you are in dispute you need support. If we have to end a dispute because of a lack of financial support - we lose!

The Union has therefore decided to set up the Support Fund that will be funded by a levy on union dues for all members of 50 cents per week (incl. GST) effective from 1 November 2006. It is important for members to understand that this is not a general increase in Union fees, your Committee of Management has previously determined to increase general Union fees each year on April 1st, the Committee will consider such factors as the year to date Consumer Price Index (CPI) and averaged Award and EBA increases when determining the amount and necessity to increase general Union fees. This increase is a Union fees levy which will be kept separate from the general funds of the

Union and will be used initially to contribute to the "Your Rights @ Work" campaign against Howard's outrageous IR laws. When our financial commitment to the campaign has been met the levy amount will then be placed in the support fund to ensure that our Union is well resourced to assist members when they are facing hardship as a result of an industrial dispute or if employers use the new laws to sue the Union and/or its members, help will be at hand.

Another important decision which your Committee of Management has made recently is to investigate the possibility of introducing a tiered scale of membership fees. The proposal is to set general union fees on a scale that will recognise members at workplaces which have an Enterprise Agreement have higher wage rates and better working conditions due to the intensive work of the Union in negotiating those agreements and therefore should pay a higher rate of Union fees than members employed at a workplace which doesn't have an Enterprise Agreement and are paid wages and conditions at the Award minimum. I hope to have this new Union fees scale in place by 1 April 2007 and will advise you in detail about this closer to that date.

The Support Fund will be your permanent insurance policy against attacks on you and your workplace rights

Craig Smith

NSW Branch Secretary CFMEU FFPD



Members rally in Blacktown on June 28 at the protest against Howard's unfair IR Laws

CONSTRUCTION

FORESTRY

MINING

ENERGY

UNION



Max Hickey, longest serving employee of the Bostobrick Mill
Thanks to The Coffs Coast Advocate for the photo

Protections stripped from AWA's

A survey of individual contracts (AWA's) signed since the new IR laws came in reveals that 16% have removed all so-called 'protected' conditions and 22% provided for no wage increase.

The survey also revealed;

- 64% did not retain leave loading
- 63% did not retain penalty rates
- 52% did not retain shift loadings, and;
- over 40% did not retain public holidays

Union makes an impact on Private Native Forestry Code

The NSW Government has released a draft code for Private Native Forestry (PNF) that restricts the harvest of native timbers. This reduction in resource will lead to devastating job losses.

The NSW Government has called for submissions from the community into its impacts.

The F&FPD has collected over 400 submissions to the government about the draft PNF code of practice.

The draft code can be downloaded at the Department of Natural Resources web site:
http://www.dlwc.nsw.gov.au/vegetation/pnf_code.shtml

The Canberra Raiders & the CFMEU

The CFMEU Construction and General Division has made an arrangement to sponsor the Canberra Raiders.

The CFMEU Forestry and Furnishing Products Division is not involved in any way and wants to make it clear that not one cent of our members money has been paid to the Canberra Raiders.

your rights at work
worth fighting for

Watch what you say, it could cost you your job

The Prime Minister's comments that employees who whinge too much around the office could be sacked is an encouragement for bosses to sack people they do not like, the ACTU Secretary has warned.

Greg Combet was responding to Howard's comments on a radio program recently, when he said "some people who have a disruptive influence in a small firm may not find it as easy to remain" under the new IR laws.

Greg Combet said, "This is exactly what we've been warn-

News Briefs & Your Rights @ Work

ing about. The Prime Minister shows an appalling prejudice against people who might have the courage to speak up about something they don't like."

Union airs contractor agreement concerns

From ABC News Online Coffs Harbour Monday, July 3, 2006.

The Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union says there has been an alarming increase in the number of North Coast timber workers being forced onto contractor agreements.

Local organiser Bluey Menon says five companies have moved most of their workers onto contractor agreements.

The arrangement forces these workers to provide their own workers' compensation and other entitlements.

Kempsey Mills are not entitled to workers assistance payments prescribed in the FISAP (Forest Industry Structural Adjustment Package) a package designed specifically to help workers made redundant because of Government decisions. Minister MacDonald made this decision and public announcement prior to any discussions with the Company or Union about the reasons why the plants were closing. The Union demanded that the Premiers Office become involved. Unfortunately to date neither the Premier nor the Minister has supported these workers claims for assistance that they are entitled to. The Company closed these mills because the Government created new National Parks on the North Coast of NSW from State Forest that reduced log supply to Kempsey and Bostobrick. The Government then gave Boral Millions of Tax payer dollars from FISAP so Boral could build a new facility at Herons Creek which now processes the remaining logs that used to be processed at Kempsey and Bostobrick. The Union fears that these workers claims for assistance under FISAP will be treated the same way the workers from the old Boral Murwillumbah plant were. RIPPED OFF by a Labor Government who would rather give a multinational company millions to build a new plant than give workers that are subsequently made redundant a fair go.

Mr Menon says the sham practice takes away the rights and protections of an award system.

"I've witnessed a couple of occasions now where employers have said to individual employees that if they don't take up the contract arrangement either their employment will be finished or they'll shut the whole place down. You couldn't call that choice, that's putting whole lot of pressure on people who have difficulty finding work elsewhere," he said.

Boral Kempsey & Bostobrick Mill closure Update

NSW Minister for Primary Industries, Ian MacDonald, announced on ABC that workers employed at Borals Timbers Bostobrick and

Trainee Organisers Start with NSW Branch

The NSW Branch will host two Trainee Organisers from the ACTU Organising Works Traineeship Program. The traineeship involves intensive on and off the job training for a period of 9 months. The trainees will boost the resources of the Union and will target recruitment of workers to the Union as their main area of work with the NSW Branch.



NEW UNION FEES - BETTER PROTECTION

CFMEU FFPD NSW DIVISIONAL BRANCH EFFECTIVE FROM 1 NOVEMBER 2006

Members and prospective members are advised that in accordance with the rules of the Union and resolution of the CFMEU FFPD, NSW Branch Committee of Management, effective from 1 November 2006 and until further notice, membership fees will be as follows:

Full Time Permanent Adults & Casuals working 38 hours or more per week

Per Week			
Rate \$6.82	Levy \$0.45	Plus GST \$0.73	Total Fees \$8.00
Per Month			
Rate \$29.55	Levy \$1.95	Plus GST \$3.15	Total Fees \$34.65
Per Half Year			
Rate \$177.27	Levy \$11.82	Plus GST \$18.91	Total Fees \$208.00

Juniors, Apprentice and Trainee Waged Casuals & Part Time less than 18 hrs per week

Per Week			
Rate \$3.41	Levy \$0.23	GST \$0.36	Total \$4.00
Per Month			
Rate \$14.77	Levy \$0.98	GST \$1.57	Total \$17.32
Per Half Year			
Rate \$88.64	Levy \$5.91	GST \$9.45	Total \$104.00

Special Category

Unemployed, Workers Compensation, Disability Services, Maternity Leave, Extended Leave

Per Week			
Rate \$1.57	Levy \$0.18	GST \$0.17	Total \$1.92
Per Month			
Rate \$6.82	Levy \$0.77	GST \$0.76	Total \$8.35
Per Half Year			
Rate \$40.91	Levy \$4.55	GST \$4.54	Total \$50.00

For Members on Payroll Deductions;

the NSW Branch Office will implement the increase in the following way; during the last week of October your employer will be notified in writing to adjust weekly deductions by the increased amount from the first pay week commencing 1 November 2006. You are not required to fill out another "authority to deduct" form as the original form you signed when you joined the Union provides the necessary authority to the employer to increase deductions on the written advice of the Union.

NSW Branch office Staff and Area Organisers will make telephone contact with your employer as a follow-up to the letter. You should check the first pay slip you receive after 1 November to ensure the deduction increase has been applied.

For Members on Monthly Direct Bank Debit;

as part of the Direct Debit Request agreement between you and the Union, this Newsletter serves as notice to you that the Union will commence debiting your account at the new rate of \$34.65 per month on the transaction date due in November.

For Members who pay their Union fees on a 6 monthly account;

an account will be sent to you shortly. The account should be paid before September the 31st and is for the period 1 October 2006 to 31 March 2007, therefore you will be financial up to 31 March 2007.

Don't forget that your union fees, which include the increase, are fully tax deductible.



Chris Hayes, MP, ALP Member for Werriwa, with CFMEU members from Corinthian Doors - St Mary's, Dunlop Bedding - Warwick Farm and Consolidated Timber Edgings - Seven Hills at the Unions June 28 National Day of Protest. It's great to see Federal Labor party politicians like Chris turning up to these events in support of the Your Rights @ Work Campaign.

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Union opposes NAFI's moves to import foreign workers

The CFMEU F&FPD is fiercely opposed to NAFI's (the National Association of Forest Industries) move to use the federal government's 457 visas to import foreign workers to undertake a range of jobs in our industry. In a report co-authored by the Australian Plantation Products and Paper Industry Council, NAFI has actively called for the importation of temporary foreign labour to replace existing workers in our industry.

457 visas allows an overseas worker to be employed for a period from three months and four years. The work performed must relate to a skilled occupation with a minimum skills threshold, and, most importantly, be used to fill in a vacancy that an employer can not fill with an Australian worker.

But, because employers do not need to test the local job market first, and because there is no policing of the program by the federal government, bad employers have been given the green light to bring in and underpay foreign workers, rather than hire and properly pay local workers. These 457 visa workers have little or no access to workplace protections or anyone to advocate on their behalf. They are often forced to pay cash to secure a job, and then charged random amounts by their employers for rent and service fees. Used in conjunction with Howard's IR laws, cheap labour on 457 visas can drive down wages, or eliminate local jobs altogether. Howard's work choices exploit Australian labour and the 457 visa sham, exploits workers world wide.

Howard's "Fair" Pay Commissioners get a rise while low paid workers suffer wage freeze

After only three months in the job, members of the Howard Government's Fair Pay Commission got a pay rise on July 1 this year. This happened despite the fact that low paid workers are suffering an 18 month wages freeze.

The commissioners each received a 4.4% increase but low paid workers will have to wait until the end of the year before the "Fair" Pay Commission makes its first decision.