



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

Solidarity is Strength



NSW BRANCH

The Timber+Furnishing Worker

Newsletter - Winter 2007



Craig Smith
Secretary
CFMEU FFPD
NSW Branch

Lowest Pay Rise for 10 years

Howard's pay commission ignores needs of battling workers

While the Howard Government is forcing Australian workers off collective agreements and onto AWAs, it has no intention of abandoning the central wage fixation system that has delivered MPs their second successive 7% pay rise and that sees Howard pocket an extra \$20,280 per year!

This year's increase was handed down by the Commonwealth Remuneration Tribunal recently and includes a 2.5% productivity rise (yet how this is measured and justified is one of life's great mysteries) and a 4.4% inflation increase – despite the fact that inflation had risen by only 3% for the year.

If the Howard Government really believes in Work Choices, why does it continue to reap the benefits of a centralised collective agreement? If the Federal Government was fair dinkum why doesn't it abolish the Remuneration Tribunal and allow its so-called Fair Pay Commission to determine MPs pay rises?

In stark contrast, the recent pay rise for award workers is the lowest rise in minimum wages for ten years and shows the Fair Pay Commission has only listened to big employer groups and the Howard Government.

Despite rising living costs, unaffordable housing prices and spiralling rents and petrol prices, major employer groups had asked the Pay Commission to award a pay rise of no more than \$10 and today we see a pay rise of between \$5 and \$10 a week awarded to around 1.2 million minimum award workers.

This shows that the Howard Govern-

ment's Pay Commission is only listening to big business and that the submissions of low paid workers and their unions have been completely ignored.

The Government's IR laws are designed to cut the wages and conditions of ordinary workers and help big business rather than average working Australians.

The Rockin' for Rights concert and march in April were a huge success and IR is starting to hurt the Howard Government who are lagging in the polls. WorkChoices can no longer be used as a name and the government is trying to back pedal. But, of course, Howard still doesn't get it.

The ACTU has identified major holes in the so-called 'Fairness Test' with around 2.5 million workers who will not be

covered by the 'test' because they are on already-registered AWAs & Agreements, earn more than \$75,000 a year or are award-free.

Workers will not be guaranteed full financial compensation for award conditions lost under the Federal Government's industrial relations laws according to the details of the Government's new WorkChoices amendments introduced into Parliament

This is the third time in just 18 months the Government has changed its IR laws but what is becoming increasingly clear is that these laws cannot be fixed by some election-time tinkering around the edges. The IR laws are fundamentally unfair and they need to be ripped up and replaced with a fair and balanced alternative that protects the basic rights of working families.



CONSTRUCTION

FORESTRY

MINING

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UNION



News Briefs

EBA Updates

The following enterprises are in the process of negotiating new Union Collective Agreements:

Dunlop Bedding

Parbury's / Deckoform

Trend Windows

Tasman Access Floors

Canterbury Windows

Sealy Bedding

The Union Collective Agreement has been completed and the vote conducted on 4/6/07.

Bunning's Frame & Truss Warnervale & Unanderra

Back pay has been paid to workers although the agreement has not yet been finalised.

Laminex - Cardiff / Unanderra / Coffs Harbour / Wagga Wagga

The Union Collective Agreement has been finalised and is awaiting a vote.

Laminex - Prospect

Negotiations commence July 2007

D&R Henderson

The Union is awaiting a response from the Office of Employment Advocate (OEA).

Corinthian Doors

Corinthian Doors delegate Barry Barrakot discovered that six employees of a labour hire company were being underpaid by \$66.00 per week. Barry was successful in correcting the rate but also achieved back pay for up to six months for these workers.

Four former employees of the labour hire firm who are now employed by Corinthian also had a claim for back pay. The CFMEU and Barry held a meeting with the State Manager of the labour hire company and Corinthian Doors. All past labour hire firm employees have received back pay of \$66.00 per week for six months.

South East Fibre Exports

A new agreement has been negotiated which maintains all the past conditions from previous EBA's. This includes a hot meal provided free of charge and prepared by fully unionised staff, free uniforms, free transport to and from work everyday and one of the best hourly rates in our industry. Despite continual attacks from the greens on working conditions in the hardwood sector, the Union has a strong relationship with SEFE and the wages and conditions



CFMEU FFPD Officials and Delegates from the North Coast attending a Union training course in Coffs Harbour

at this site prove that the greens are, once again, misrepresenting our industry.

Pentarch

The softwood log export facility at Eden has been open for a year now, this site is fully unionised with a Union Collective Agreement in place.

Ausply

Despite ongoing negotiations with the company, this matter has still not been resolved. At this stage the Union is corresponding with Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) seeking their assistance to resolve the matter. There is a possibility that further industrial action may eventuate.

New Trainee organiser for New South Wales - Gavin Playford

My name is Gavin Playford and I've just recently started with the Union as a trainee Organizer. I worked in a range of industries prior to commencing in the forest and forest products industry. I was employed in warehousing with Gunnersens and I then moved to C.S.R. Woodpanels becoming the co-delegate and then Delegate. After a period of years C.S.R. transferred us with their business to Laminex and then to Linfox.

Over a period of about 15 years I was the union delegate and was tested severely by Linfox in their desires to strip anything from the workers that they could get away with. In the vast majority of cases we would utilize our negotiating skills in combination with a good knowledge of the EBA to make sure

that our rights as workers were not trampled on. I found that having a good understanding of my EBA and Award put me in a position of power and gave me the ability to stop most bad decisions being implemented.

I was the First Aid Officer, Fire warden, on the OH&S committee, an ECC member, and I took every course that was made available to me. I found that the more I learnt, the better I was at getting outcomes that were favorable to all.

During my time there I participated in negotiating many EBA's with some great results and occasionally learning some invaluable lessons by being burnt. On the whole though I would say we were very successful.

I started working with the NSW branch of the Union at Parramatta in early May. I've been assigned A.H.Beards, Sealy, and Dunlop/Sleepmaker, which are the 3 big bedding companies in Sydney as some of the sites under my care.

I am also the Union Organizer for the members at Oberon, a town which revolves around the timber industry, with huge timber mills both Green and Dry and Processing plants for MDF, Mouldings, Door skins and Flooring. It is a great responsibility and I am enjoying it immensely and hope that through hard work and perseverance I can help to improve people's working lives.

Gavin Playford



ROCKIN' FOR RIGHTS!



Thanks for your support!

Enrol to vote NOW

The Howard Government has changed the electoral laws to make it harder for people to vote. The new law closes the electoral roll on the very day that the election is called. This will have particular impact on young people voting for the first time.

If you are not on the electoral roll you cannot vote. Enrolling to vote is easy.

You can download an enrolment form from the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) web page at:

www.aec.gov.au

or stop by the nearest AEC Office (phone 13 23 26 for the address) and enrol on the spot.

CHECK YOUR ENROLMENT
You can check your enrolment details at:

<https://oevf.aec.gov.au/>

CHANGE YOUR ENROLMENT
If you need to make changes to your enrolment, fill out the form available at:

<http://www.aec.gov.au/content/what/enrolment/forms.htm>

FIRST TIME VOTERS
For all young people aged 17 or 18 yrs, go to:

<http://www.enroltovoteweek.com.au/>

FURTHER HELP OR INFORMATION
Contact the Electoral Commission by phoning 13 23 26, or visit their help page:
<http://www.aec.gov.au/content/what/contact/index.htm>

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO GET ON THE ROLL? It is compulsory for all Australian citizens over 18 years to be on the Electoral Roll and everyone who is not on the roll needs to be. If you're 17 years old, you can enrol but you can't vote until you're 18.

WHAT IF I HAVEN'T BEEN ON THE ROLL FOR YEARS, WILL I BE PROSECUTED? No. The AEC will not prosecute you. The priority for them is that all eligible Australian are enrolled.

TAKE YOUR ID WITH YOU
You need a drivers' licence or another form of 'prescribed' identification. If you have neither, your enrolment form must be signed by two referees who are not related to you, but who have known you for at least one month and they must provide their drivers' licence number.

Financial Reports

The CFMEU FFPD NSW Branch full Financial Report for the financial year ending June 30 2006 is available online at:

www.cfmeu-forestdivision.com.au/branches/nsw/Financialreport2006

Or go to www.cfmeu.asn.au

and click on the **Forestry** tab, then click on the **Branches** tab and under NSW Branch you will find the link to the Financial Reports section.

You can also obtain a full copy of the report by writing to the Union at:

CFMEU FFPD NSW Divisional Branch
Financial Reports
Reply Paid 207
Parramatta NSW 2124

Please provide your full name and membership number and a complete copy of the financial report will be sent to you at the address we have on our membership system.



North Coast Union Delegate Training

Article by CFMEU FFPD North Coast Organiser, Bluey Menon

Coffs Harbour hosted newly elected delegates from across the North Coast of NSW on the 31st. May and 1st June for a 'New Delegates' training course.

This course was designed to help delegates understand their responsibilities as workplace representatives and provide them with some basic tools they can use in order to better represent Union members, and any issues Union members might have in the workplace.

As John Howard's Federal Government tries to limit the extent to which Union officials have access to the workplaces it becomes more critical than ever to provide this kind of education to people who volunteer to represent your rights at work.

To all of the people who attended this course thanks are extended to you again, it is often a very difficult job that is done on an unpaid basis. Often unrecognized but always appreciated by your members and officials.

This course was delivered by Peter Stafford who is the CFMEU trainer. Peter as been an adult educator for many years and, by results, is measured as a very good one.

The Coffs Harbour delegates training course coincided with two other significant events, the first being an Executive meeting of the Committee of Management of the Union, this is the governing body of the Union and comprises of elected Union officials and Union mem-

bers who are responsible for making decisions about how the Union operates in much the same way a company has a board of directors.

It was unusual that the delegates at the course at the opportunity to observe that meeting. The second event was the nomination of three Honorary Life Members to the Union. They are Robert Speedy former delegate at Boral Timber Kyogle and Bev Birmingham who was the delegate at Norply Kyogle and Lenny Sutherland who was the delegate at Ford Timbers Woodenbong.

All of these people contributed significantly to the betterment of the working lives of the union members at their respective worksites, they were outstanding delegates who gave much of themselves ask for nothing in return and they thoroughly deserve this honour bestowed on them. Due to ill health Bev and Lenny were unable to attend this function.



CFMEU FFPD National Secretary Michael O'Connor with Union delegates at the training course held in Coffs Harbour

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