Branch Update

Winter 2014

I PROMISE:

No cuts to health
No cuts to education
No change to pensions
We won’t touch Medicare
No new taxes

Tony Abbott pre 2013 Election

GP Tax • Petrol Tax
Increased Uni Fees
Health Cuts
LISC Removed

2014 Abbott Budget

In This Issue:

• Liar, Liar – Budget A Litany Of Broken Promises
• ASU Members Set To Contest Next State Election
• Fee Changes Will Impact Health Services
• ASU History Project

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Branch Update

Winter 2014

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Authorised and printed/published by Julie Bignell, Branch Secretary - Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union, Central and Southern Queensland Clerical and Administrative Branch, Union of Employees and the Australian Services Union Central and Southern Queensland Branch - Level 3 - 27 Peel Street, South Brisbane Q. 4101 Australia PO Box 3272 South Brisbane BC QLD 4101 Australia. Tel: 1800 177 244 • Fax: 07 3017 6275 • Website: www.qld.asu.net.au • Email: info@qld.asu.net.au
ASU members have been very busy in the last 6 months bargaining for improvements to wages and conditions.

Unfortunately over the same period, our federal and state governments have been beavering away with plans to make it harder for working people to make ends meet.

If you haven’t had the chance to catch up on the latest federal budget news, take a look at our special Budget Wrap-Up researched by the ACTU. If all of these measures are passed by the Senate, Australians will be far worse off. The tragedy is that our economy is still strong, and we don’t need austerity measures which tear at the very fabric of our society. Make sure you let your Senator and Local Member know that you expect them to vote down these disgraceful attacks on those who deserve more help, not less.

Perhaps the most disgusting effort during the selling of the budget by the LNP was Treasurer Joe Hockey’s divisive speech where he actually referred to our society as being made up of “Lifters or Leaners”, and proceeded to stir up tax payers by suggesting to them that a month of their pay each year went to support someone else.

Mr Hockey failed to mention that none of us get to choose how our tax dollars get spent because we are supposed to put it all in the pot and then work out the priorities – that is what being part of a community means.

I for one don’t want to live in a community where each day we step over the bodies of those who are made homeless because they can’t get unemployment benefits for 6 months, or their health program has been cut, or they can’t afford to support themselves anymore and Meals on Wheels no longer can help them.

Maybe a small proportion of Australians who live in gated communities and never come outside might be comforted by the greedy divisiveness of Mr Hockey’s strategy, but the rest of us know it is not that simple, and at the end of the day, we’re all in this together.

Another disgraceful attack is the watering down of the FOFA reforms that had been introduced by Labor in order to stop unscrupulous financial advisors ripping off mum and dad investors.

These laws would have saved Australians billions each year, and prevented the kind of heartache that has engulfed so many Australians who were lied to by greedy financial advisors who are not legally compelled to act in the best interests of their client. Imagine if the medical profession operated the same way!

I know I am very much looking forward to voting at the next state and federal elections. We’ve taken the opportunity to introduce you to a few ASU members who are keen to take up the challenge – feel free to get in touch with them if you want to discuss any of your key issues or maybe join the fight for a better and fairer Australia.

In Unity,

Julie Bignell
Branch Secretary

Joining On-Line

Your friends and colleagues can join the Union on-line by going to: www.qld.asu.net.au and click ‘Join’ in the top menu.

It’s easy, confidential and offers secure payment options. Don’t wait until it’s too late – we have a pre-existing problems policy that allows us to assist financial members only.
Budget a litany of Broken Promises

Liar, liar – pants on fire!

Mr Abbott has for a long while championed a high standard when it comes to keeping promises to the electorate.

On August 22, 2011 he said: “It is an absolute principle of democracy that governments should not and must not say one thing before an election and do the opposite afterwards. Nothing could be more calculated to bring our democracy into disrepute and alienate the citizenry of Australia from their government than if governments were to establish by precedent that they could say one thing before an election and do the opposite afterwards.”

This is from a man who also famously said on the 7.30 Report in a May 2010 interview with Kerry O’Brien: “Well, again Kerry, I know politicians are gonna be judged on everything they say, but sometimes, in the heat of discussion, you go a little bit further than you would if it was an absolutely calm, considered, prepared, scripted remark, which is one of the reasons why the statements that need to be taken absolutely as gospel truth are those carefully prepared scripted remarks”.

In his 2013 election campaign, Tony Abbott repeatedly promised the Australian people “No cuts to health, no cuts to education, no changes to pensions and no new taxes”. He also promised a government with no surprises.

The Real Budget

No Cuts to Health ... No Cuts to Education - LIES
Abbott and Hockey have cut funding to the states to the tune of $80 billion over the next 10 years. These cuts have been ‘spun’ as funding withdrawals. But the fact is they are broken promises because Abbott guaranteed he would stick to the previous government’s health and education spending allocations prior to the election.

With the planned deregulation of university fees the government has back-flipped on a key promise made by the Education Minister, Christopher Pyne in August 2012, when he stated: “The Coalition has no plans to increase university fees.

I PROMISE:

No cuts to health
No cuts to education
No change to pensions
We won’t touch Medicare
No new taxes

No new taxes ... LIES
With the introduction of a $7 fee for GP visits, pathology visits and medical imaging visits, it is hard to see how they can say that there are no new taxes. An additional $7 fee to see your local GP is most certainly a new tax if you apply the transparent rule that we did not pay it before.

This budget will also increase the cost that Australians have to pay for medicines and that works out to an increased tax mainly on those who can least afford it - pensioners.

A Temporary Budget Repair Levy of 2% applying to those earning more than $180,000 for the next three years is about the extent that those who can most afford it will feel with regard to budget pain.

continued over page >>>
Broken Promises continued >>>

But even they were lied to! However, with a bit of creative accounting they can absolve themselves of any additional tax liabilities, so no harm done there eh? And by the way – it’s not a tax! No really, it isn’t!

In order to make up that shortfall in tax income, Abbott has re-introduced the indexation of fuel excise, thus ensuring that the price of everything in this country will go up, and on a regular basis, and also ensured that those on lower incomes will feel most of the pain. With friends like Tony, who needs enemies?

No changes to pensions ... LIES

Tony Abbott and his government have a sneaky plan to cut pensions via lower indexation arrangements.

This will affect the Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Carer’s Payment, Veteran’s Pensions, and Wife and Widow Pensions by changing the indexed rises from average weekly earnings to the consumer price index resulting in lower increases in pension payments.

With changes forecasted for the pension asset/income test, this budget, over a short period of time, will greatly affect the standard of living for Australia’s 3.2 million pensioners, but not in any positive way. And to instigate further savings Abbott and Hockey have now raised the age of retirement to 70 years. No changes to pensions? Yeah sure.

So that’s how Abbott and Hockey say thank you to our valued pensioners for stumpng up for their free education.

Young and unemployed ... CUT

Young unemployed people will be completely on their own for the first six months of unemployment, with no income support from government.

After those first six months, people will have to work for the dole, a scheme that does not work to help people find real jobs. After the six months of work for the dole, people will be on their own again, with no income support. ‘Young’ means people under 30.

The six month waiting period will be reduced for young people with a prior work history. One month will be discounted from the waiting period for each year of full-time work a person has completed in the past (pro-rata for part time/casual work).

This is a breathtakingly harsh, punitive measure that will not help people find work.

Family payments reduced ... CUT

Family Tax Benefit Part B (FTB-B), which is paid to single-income families, will be significantly tightened. It will now only be paid to families with incomes below $100,000 per year (down from $150,000). The more serious change is that FTB-B will now only be paid to parents of children younger than 6 years of age. A small payment ($750 per year) for low-income single parents with children aged between 6 years and 12 years will partly offset the loss of FTB-B for some families.

The income test will also be tightened a little for Family Tax Benefit Part A (FTB-A), which is paid to low- and middle-income families based on household income. The payment rates for both FTB-A and FTB-B will fall in real terms over the next two years, as their indexation will be ‘paused’.

This means that inflation will reduce the real value of payments between 1 July 2014 and 1 July 2016. The FTB end-of-year supplements will also be cut immediately and will cease to be indexed, which mean a reduction of $1.2 billion in payments over four years.

No changes and no surprises from this government?

What about Super? DELAYED

With the delay to the Superannuation Guarantee (SG) increase timetable the government has found a way to further derail the retirement plans of many Australians.

The SG rate will increase from 9.25% to 9.5% on 1 July 2014 and remain pegged at this level until 30 June, 2018. They claim this is to provide the economy and small business with a short-term boost but in reality achieves nothing, as business has been acclimatised to plan for 5G increases for some years now.

There is also no reprieve for the Lower Income Super Contribution (LISC) that will be axed as part of the repeal of the Mining Tax Legislation.

However, LISC is widely recognised as sound superannuation policy that provides real superannuation tax equity to low income earners in the form of a benefit worth up to $500 per year.

With the removal of LISC, low income earners will be the only Australians not to receive a tax break on their superannuation savings.

Source: ACTU Budget Briefing

2014 Budget Key Points

• Young unemployed without income support for 6 months per year.
• 16,500 public sector jobs to go, with more through privatisation.
• Super Guarantee increase delayed four years.
• Redundancy entitlements less protected when employers go bust.
• Cuts to indexing for many welfare payments.
• Temporary levy for highest income earners.
• Family payments cut.
• PPL scheme survives, capped at $50,000 over 6 months, not means tested.
• New $7 GP payment & higher co-payment for prescription drugs.
• Big cuts to funding for health and education, particularly beyond 2017-18.
• Uni fees to rise, HELP (HECS) debt to attract real interest rate, repayment threshold cut.
• A range of industry assistance programs will be cut or axed.
• Tools for Your Trade program to help apprentices to buy their tools will be abolished, new loan scheme created.
• Twice yearly fuel excise indexation will be reintroduced.
• Company tax to be cut, MRRT & carbon price abolished.
• Union royal commission to cost $53.3 million.

Source: ACTU Budget Briefing

ACTU
I hate broken promises because ...........

It means universities are going to be run more and more like private businesses and students will have to pay more for a decent education. It will turn off working class kids.

I was a working class kid who got a free university education because the government of the day saw the value of investing in higher education for all, not just for the privileged.

Now I have to work till I am 70 years old. Are you serious? I have 41 years of work ahead of me yet?

How do you expect that we can work longer to fund our own retirement when we aren’t going to be healthy enough to enjoy it after you work us to the ground?

All well and good for Mr Abbott who probably has worked in office jobs most his life – but shift work etc? You have got to be joking!

Mr Abbott’s leadership is breaking something that is not broken! Why change the way our Medicare system works and make it more “Americanised” when Obama is working so hard to make the American health system more like ours.

If our model of care is a guide for others to achieve, why change it?

Charges for doctors visits and increases to medications? When our vulnerable members of the community are already living on a day-to-day basis, $7 could mean the world.

If a person had to make a decision about buying $7 worth of food or going to see the doctor and they are already counting each dollar they have on their pension, I am worried that they won’t go to the doctor and they won’t get that medicine so their health is going to decline.

While we currently try and push primary health care (prevention), we may step backwards towards a more secondary or tertiary model and have to treat those that are ill already rather than preventing the illness – and this is already proven to cost more in the long run. You know the saying ... prevention is better than cure!

Cutting the National Respite for Carers Program is detrimental to the health and wellbeing of our carers who are keeping their loved ones when they are still at home and saving the government money by not having them in hospices.

If our carers aren’t being supported, then they won’t be able to do the valuable work they do and perhaps our already overloaded health system will be pressured more as these client’s won’t be able to care for them at home.

I’m an optimist and I am always hopeful that some good will come out of government allocation of our tax dollars via the budget.

Unfortunately we have been delivered a budget that attacks the vulnerable - our low-income families, our unemployed, our sick, our elderly, our indigenous Australians, our migrants and refugees and our students.

When cuts are made to the health, education and support for families (and their children) what sort of foundation are we providing for the future of Australia?

“\textit{It is an absolute principle of democracy that governments should not and must not say one thing before an election and do the opposite afterwards}”. 
\textit{Tony Abbott, August 2011}
Our union’s history is a proud one – colourful, full of lessons that have been learnt, it defines where we have come from and challenges us to commit to an even stronger future!

As a branch, we look forward to 2015 and celebrating being 100 years strong and in doing so, we reflect upon past members’ achievements and admire their resilience.

Our union has been shaped by so many thousands of working people who have struggled, prospered and created this Union into a union that has purpose, is inclusive and is committed to winning.

Where we come from!

The Federated Clerks Union (FCU) had its birth in 1908 with operations originally confined to a Victorian branch.

It wasn’t until April 1911, when application was made by Tom Coffey to the Commonwealth Arbitration court for the Federal Organisation of employees to promote the economic and industrial welfare of Clerks, that the union came into its own.

In 1912 in Victoria, a female section was established within the FCU to organise the clerical female workforce and campaign for equal pay for women in the industry. These women were led by one of the pioneering women of the Australian Labor movement, Ellen Mulcahy.

A small group in Queensland then established a unit to advance the interests of clerks and in 1915 an official of the Federal union addressed this group, who were then known as the “Queensland Association of Clerks”, encouraging them to join the Federated Clerks union of Australia.

And so, in June 1915, the Queensland branch of our Federation came into being. The development of the federation snow balled from there, and by the end of 1915 all State unions were charted as branches of the federation.
Queensland Officials played an important role in building the federation and Tom Foat (QLD Branch Secretary) went on to become the first Secretary of the Federation in 1918, with a national office in Melbourne.

**Centenary in 2015**

Next year (2015) marks the centenary of our Branch – and this significant milestone is worth celebrating!

Branch conference Delegates recently set up a sub-committee to examine activities leading up to next year, as it is important that all members are part of these centenary celebrations and have the opportunity to reflect on the great Union we have become.

We have a significant amount of archived information outlining the history of the union, journals, minutes of meetings, photographs etc., and have started preliminary discussions with Professor Bob Russell to get his views on ways to best record/archive and catalogue our collection.

As a union, we have come so far, reached so many milestones and been part of and driven so much change in our workplaces, industries and the broader community. Over the years we have participated in:

- The fight for equal pay
- Fought to have our voice heard on the political agenda
- Become a strong voice for members in the broader union movement
- And shared some pretty great fashion along the way!

Whilst we face many challenges ahead, we know by looking back at our history that many of these battles are familiar to us.

We fight for our voices to be heard, and the enduring commitment of clerical workers in Australia to a fairer society is reflected in our continuing fight to protect the fundamental principles of unionism.

We fight for the right to organise and the right to collectively bargain – these rights sit at the very heart of the 21st century struggle for a fair and just Australia, just as they did throughout the previous century.

As committed unionists, we will best keep the faith with those who have worked and sacrificed to build the ASU over the past century by keeping our union cause bright and vibrant into the future, and we start by acknowledging the past in our centenary celebrations.

**Members’ suggestions**

How should we best celebrate our centenary? Let us know your thoughts by sending an email to: irene.monro@together.org.au

Are you interested in our History Project?

Do you have old photos, bulletins, or reminiscences you can share? Do you have friends or family members who have been involved in the ASU or our predecessor the Federated Clerks Union over the years?

We want to hear from you to make sure this valuable information is not lost – so please get in touch with the Project Co-ordinator, Irene Monro at: irene.monro@together.org.au
ASU Branch Council Meets

The governing body of the ASU C&SQ Branch met on Saturday 28th June.

The function of the Branch Council is to be the administrative committee for the union, which means that the members must ensure that the union’s administrative, financial and governance objectives are being met.

Branch Council also reviews key issues affecting members and gives policy instructions to our elected officials on how to deal with issues and also hears reports from officials about bargaining outcomes and membership issues across all of our many industries and workplaces.

Life Memberships
At this meeting Branch Council awarded Life Membership to two long serving and very hard working representatives, Errold Bryant and Kevin Place.

Errold was able to receive his award in person, as he is currently a member of the Branch Council. He has been a member of the ASU (and our predecessor the FCU) for 31 years and performed the role of Delegate in his workplace, the Brisbane City Council, for much of that time. Errold has also served on the Branch Conference and Branch Council, and has been an important resource for us in terms of financial and governance issues, as well as having a great deal of practical experience and common sense. He has participated in almost every kind of union activity over the years, from enterprise bargaining to industrial action, and has been an inspiration to many members and fellow Delegates across the union.

We have great pleasure in awarding Life Membership to Errold.

Errol says, “I’m not a typical ‘joiner’ because I don’t want to apologise for things other people have or haven’t done, but I’ve never had to apologise for my union. I really feel at home in our union.”

See also our story on page 12 farewelling Assistant Secretary Kevin Place, who was unable to be there on the day due to having relocated to South Australia to be with his family.

Planning for the future
Branch Councillors received a report from Branch Secretary Julie Bignell on the progress of negotiations between the state union Together, our Branch, and the national ASU to resolve key issues around the best structure for our union and how to resource our operations.

The final stages of admitting Together members into the ASU are technical and require a number of rule changes by each of the three parties in order to bring an identical structure into place.

A large part of our negotiations have been around resourcing our work in ASU areas and ensuring that members get a fair say generally and a decisive say in terms of their own workplace and industry issues. This is why we are pursuing a model based on Divisions which group together similar industries and occupations.

A framework has been agreed to work with, and we are hopeful that this will progress smoothly in order to place our union on the best footing possible to meet our current and future challenges for all members.
Anglicare Joins a Growing List of Employers Agreeing to Family Violence Leave

One million Australian workers now have access to leave to deal with effects of family violence, thanks to union negotiations – and your Australian Services Union representatives have led the way.

Victims of family violence are often vulnerable, traumatised and left with little support. The last thing they need is to risk losing their jobs. Maintaining paid work and independence is crucial for people trying to escape the cycle of family violence, and these Agreements recognise this.

We have found that many employers are aware of the issue and willing to include this provision to take leave in Enterprise Bargaining Agreements. This is a sign of the growing community and employer awareness of family violence and its effects on the community.

Our Union has a proud history of showing leadership on the campaign to eliminate violence against women and children and we were the first union in Australia to negotiate for these provisions for our members.

These Employers have agreed to a shared community responsibility to support workers who are dealing with the effects of family violence, in the same way they support workers who are sick or injured.

In March 2013 the ACTU addressed United Nation’s delegates on the world-leading work of Australian unions in helping guard against the horrors of domestic violence and shared with other countries our Australian Services Union Model Family Violence Clause.

Industrial Officer for the ACTU Belinda Tkalcevic represented the work of unions on a panel in New York with Australia heralded as a world leader in negotiating paid domestic violence leave for employees.

Belinda told them “Australian unions have been fighting for, and won, support for sufferers of domestic and family violence to stay in their jobs.”

“The UN has recognised the importance of maintaining paid work and financial independence in order to escape violent relationships. It’s a good feeling to know the world wants to hear about the work that we have achieved in Australia,” said Belinda.

Anglicare Delegate, Carissa Paulger with ASU Industrial Officer, Valda Graham

Carissa Paulger from Anglicare has this to say about the Family Violence Leave Clause that she helped negotiate in the current EBA:

“This was important to me as I have lived in a situation where I was exposed to domestic violence and the stress and strain on me as just a housemate and not directly involved was immense. After 6 weeks living there, I moved out. The Family Violence Leave would have granted me some leave to seek alternative housing and move out. This wasn’t available to me at the time, but it is of some comfort to me to know in the future if ANYONE is in a similar situation that they would have a confidential means of leave with the support of the employer.”

In Queensland the following employers have agreed to the inclusion of a Family Violence Clause in their Enterprise Agreement:

- Anglicare Clerical EBA
- Royal Flying Doctor Service Qld
- ETU Administration Agreement
- AEIOU Foundation (Autism Early Intervention Outcomes Unit)
- RACQ
- Ozcare Community and Support Staff Agreement
- Teachers Union Health
- Golden Circle
- Virgin Australia

We congratulate the above companies on their commitment to their workers!

There are a number of other employers who have not as yet agreed to this important workplace provision with whom we are currently negotiating, and they include:

- Red Cross Blood Service
- Sunstate
- Churches of Christ Aged Care
- RSL Care
- Prescare Allied Health
- Southernex Clerical
- Wesley Medical Imaging
- UnitingCare Health
- BlueCare/Wesley Mission Aged Care Clerical
- BlueCare/Wesely Mission Community and Allied Health
- Holy Spirit Northside
- St Vincents Toowoomba
- St Vincents Brisbane
- Bethany Christian Care
ASU Farewells Assistant Branch Secretary Kevin Place

Many Delegates and members will have been supported by Kevin Place over the years.

Kevin has worked across all sectors of the union, and has also conducted training courses and many, many negotiations for improvements to pay and conditions for thousands of ASU members.

Kevin is originally from South Australia, and has chosen to return to Adelaide for his retirement.

Having attempted to retire once from the ASU some years ago, he was successfully lured back and eventually became Assistant Secretary. Kevin was also concurrently Deputy Secretary for the state amalgamated entity, Together. We would like to thank Kevin on behalf of all ASU members for his valuable and significant contribution over several decades.

Our Branch Council has decided to award Kevin Life Membership and take this opportunity to congratulate him on his wonderful achievements.

We wish Kevin and wife Pauline all the very best in their retirement.

New Assistant Branch Secretary

As we farewell Assistant Secretary Kevin Place we welcome Irene Monro into the role of the new ASU Assistant Secretary.

Irene is well known to many of you in her 7 years with the ASU. Irene has been the Lead Organiser for the Public Sector and also been the Lead for the Private sector over these years. In addition to working closely with members in each of our key industries to secure stronger industrial outcomes she has also coordinated the Delegate training for the Branch.

Irene has trained hundreds of our Delegates over the years and has also recently been the Lead for the Amalgamated Union - the Together Education and Development Unit. Training new Organisers and new Delegates has been a highlight of Irene’s 20 year career with the Union movement.

"Training Delegate is an incredibly rewarding part of my role in the union. Seeing ASU members develop skills and confidence to take on important issues and win is a wonderful process to be part of," says Irene.

“I have worked with so many Delegates over the years who have gone on to be elected to senior positions within our governing bodies and it is so inspiring to see their journey,” she said.

Irene joined the ASU after a 14 years with the United Voice Union (Previously known as the LHMU) where she also supported Delegates in campaigning and training roles. Irene also held various State and National Executive positions with that union and with that experience understands all too well the need for strong union governance and accountability.

Irene says, “I intend to bring all my campaigning and Delegate training to my role as Assistant Secretary to continue to fight with our members for recognition, respect and fairness in their workplaces and industries”.

“I am incredibly privileged to become the next ASU Assistant secretary and thank Kevin Place, the outgoing Assistant Secretary, for all his hard work and dedication to our Union”.

“I look forward to working with Julie and all the ASU team who collectively - with all of you, continue to build a strong, accountable and effective ASU”.

“As we look forward to celebrating being 100 years strong in Queensland, we reflect on the values and commitment of our past members and take up the challenge to continue to represent workers with dignity and strength,” Irene said.
Fee Changes Will Impact Health Services

By Ruth McFarlane  
ASU Branch President

We are the ‘smart country’ – well that’s the line our politicians like to push.

For many years we had free university education so that we could harness and improve the intelligence of our younger generation, so we could diversify and grow stronger, so that Australia could gain recognition as innovators in industry and on the world stage as contributors to a better planet.

We had a real understanding back then that if we educated our children Australia would be more successful in just about everything we did. And we had a universally recognised free, quality health system. But now, with the looming deregulation of university fees, we place at risk the foundation of what has enabled so much success. And that is a quality, affordable education for all Australians.

People like Joe Hockey and Tony Abbott, back then future Treasurer and Prime Ministerial aspirants, had the benefit of a free university education, happily paid for by today’s retirees through their tax contributions, so their children had the best chance to succeed and in doing so, helped make Australia a very successful country.

So one would now have to ask – what are they doing?

By opening our universities up to fee competition Hockey and Abbott have all but guaranteed that only the wealthiest of Australians and the children of wealthy foreigners will be able to afford a university education. As there are only a finite number of places in our universities and with the stark possibility that fees are set to more than double, only those with money will be able to afford a degree. With the application of market rates to student loans, your average Australian student will most probably be priced out of higher education.

And with the federal government reducing the amount of funding for university courses by approximately 20%, universities, already under budget pressure, will be forced to raise fees, so any justification by Education Minister, Christopher Pyne that fee competition will reduce fees is just sheer fantasy. How Mr Pyne, a person with the benefit of a free, quality university education, could come up with that outcome, simply defies logic.

So where does this leave health services?

In a nutshell – with fewer staff and totally dependent on foreign technology. Students who might obtain degrees and become Information Technology Officers, Accountants or qualified Clinicians will be impacted by the fee changes at universities. If these future health professionals cannot afford to study then they will not be able to fill the growing number of vacancies in our health system or innovate to improve the way we deliver technology and service.

With fewer Australians being able to afford degrees our higher education sector will become an export driven industry, with the focus being on educating students from other countries rather than focusing on educating young Australians. We might as well just chop our heads off. And an aging population will only compound the problems that health services face, many times.

Flow on effects

With fewer students being able to afford degrees, the cost of hiring qualified health practitioners will also rise, placing huge strains on future health budgets. With many courses possibly being fully subscribed by overseas students whose parents can afford to pay the most, there will be a shortage of locally trained health professionals and the only option left is of paying larger salaries to attract foreign health professionals.

With our semi-privatised health system, those outcomes will only drive up the cost of delivery of services to the patient through the roof. We’ll probably need a medical levy (not tax) by that time just to keep up with the demand for health services, as many people will opt out of private health cover due to it being unaffordable and the requirement for public health to supply the unprofitable services neglected by private health providers.

In Private Health, the cost of providing services will rise exponentially, with private health service providers delivering the cheapest possible outcomes by cutting corners and by just not providing unprofitable services in their search for profit.

And the end result? People suffering because they cannot afford treatment, people suffering because of poor treatment, people without careers because they cannot afford the qualifications, people suffering because of poor treatment, people without careers because they cannot afford the qualifications, innovation in health stifled because our young people don’t get the opportunity to innovate, our once proud health system decimated and the general health of all Australians declining, all because of political ideals that have no logical place in the health and education sectors of Australian society.

So what did Abbott, Hockey and Pyne study at university? Stupidity?
ASU Members Set to Contest Next State Election

Leeanne Enoch has lived in Brisbane’s south and Logan for many years and is a mother to two teenage sons. Growing up in a working class family, Leeanne’s parents taught her about strength and endurance, a strong work ethic and a fair go for all. Leeanne’s lifelong commitment to education began early in life and she spent more than a decade as a high school teacher, teaching in a number of schools in South-East Queensland and in an East London school where her passion for community development and social justice grew stronger.

Since her time as a teacher, Leeanne has held senior roles in local and state government departments leading the development and implementation of policies to support some of Queensland’s most at risk families. Leeanne worked for the Australian Red Cross for seven years in management roles at the state and national level guiding humanitarian efforts to improve the lives of Australia’s most vulnerable communities.

She currently works with the QCU to bring justice and equity to all Queenslanders. Leeanne is a proud Nunukul/Nughi woman from North Stradbroke Island. She has a strong sense of social justice supported by her remarkable ability to hear the needs of others and turn issues into positive actions. To volunteer to help Leeanne go to: www.qldlabor.org/volunteer-sign-up/

John Martin is the ALP candidate for the State seat of Clayfield. John, an ASU member, lives in the electorate at Wavell Heights, where he lived the first 23 years of his life. He also attended high school in the electorate.

Up until the election of the Newman Government John worked as an Employee Relations Manager for a Queensland Government department but found he could not reconcile himself with the policy position adopted by the Newman Government.

The callousness and stupidity of the decision being made by Government were contrary to John’s professional training and he resigned a matter of months after the election of the Newman Government.

John has held management positions in industrial relations in both public and private sectors. He has most recently been employed as the Research and Policy Officer at the Queensland Council of Unions for approximately two years.

John has previously worked within the trade union movement including a decade at the LH MU (now United Voice).

John has also worked as a ministerial advisor being the industrial relations advisor to the Martin Government in the Northern Territory.

Having worked in a range of jurisdictions and industries John has substantial experience with the major challenges facing employees and employers throughout Australia.

Currently completing a PhD, John has an undergraduate business degree and first class honours in commerce, both majoring in industrial relations.

John has lectured and tutored in the disciplines of management and industrial relations.

In addition to these academic qualifications, he is a past-President of the Industrial Relations Society of Queensland and has been invited to speak at domestic and international conferences.

John's partner, Irene, is a senior union official and they have two children Jacob (11) and Joseph (4).

John has been involved in the Toombul Junior Cricket Club including holding the positions of President and Secretary. John and Jacob are members of the Queensland Reds (Rugby Union) and attend all home games.

To help John with his campaign please email: clayfield@queenslandlabor.org
A New Government – A New Wages Policy

Energex wrote to the union on the 4 February 2014 to say they wanted to start having discussions for the new EBA. This is again the same process that has been followed in the past.

Energex Management said that they needed to take the “proposal” to the Board which met on the 26 May 2014 and then they needed to seek approval from the government.

So why then did Energex at the EBA meeting on the 12 June 2014 say they couldn’t hold discussions around any matter until they received Cabinet Budget Review Committee (CBRC) approval?

Energex did say that the Board would not agree to a roll over agreement as the current EBA doesn’t provide them the flexibility they need to set them up for the next 5 years.

Our members expressed frustration and said they did not understand why ‘discussions’ could not occur until CBRC approval had been obtained when in the past CBRC approval was only sought at the end of the process.

Energex said that the negotiations will be different this time around, there is a …

“new government, a new wages policy – it’s different”

So what difference does a new Government make in Energex? – it means that:

- workers can’t negotiate with their employer until the Newman Government say they can
- the Newman Government is going after their job security the same way they have in the rest of the Public Service
- everything is up for grabs

“I discovered just how crucial it is to address injustices and problems – to stand up and speak out. I also learnt you can’t do that by yourself. You have to build your union in your workplace and work on others to stand with you,” said Chris

From 2000 Chris served the Burpengary, Beachmere and Deception Bay communities for 12 years as the local councillor.

As councillor Chris initiated vital community projects including the Deception Bay foreshore renewal and the Burpengary Greenlinks park land. He was known for “standing up” for local residents: Chris was outspoken on Council’s profit from their water business and the response of Council to the January 2011 floods.

Chris is a volunteer for local community groups including the Deception Bay Lions Club, the Burpengary State School Council, Deception Bay Community Youth Programs and The Abbey Museum. He also been a member of Al Gore’s The Climate Project.

He has a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Degree and a Master of Journalism from the University of Queensland. Chris now works as a real estate agent, and lives in Burpengary with his wife Sian and two children, Guy and Rebecca.

“Like many others, I just could not stand to see what the Campbell Newman government has done to our state,” said Chris

“More than ever, this is the time to stand up and take action with other like minded Queenslanders and make this a just and equitable society again.”

To volunteer to help Chris go to: www.queenslandlabor.org/volunteer-sign-up/

Energex did say that the Board would not agree to a roll over agreement as the current EBA doesn’t provide them the flexibility they need to set them up for the next 5 years.

If the Energex example is anything to go by – ASU members in Government Owned Corporations are about to bear the brunt – like so many other State government workers – of a ruthless State Government bargaining approach.

So from the Energex Workers – thanks Mr Newman for sharing the pain ...

Vale Dianne Arnold

It is with sadness that we mark the passing of a member of the Ergon and ASU family. Dianne (Clarke) Arnold was a very active member of the Union movement in Ergon and has been instrumental in helping a lot of people within her time her at the NCC.

Many of the longer members of the Ergon family will remember her and her willingness to make herself available to help.

Dianne left due to illness about 6 years ago and passed away on 22 May, 2014.

Our Rockhampton members extend their most heartfelt condolences to Dianne’s family and friends.
Collective agreement negotiations continue as a central pillar of work across the private sector. Agreements are being negotiated in workplaces such as Yellow Cabs, Mindpearl, Oceania Aviation, NBN Co, Greyhound and many more.

Collective industrial issues often arise during the bargaining process but during the first half of 2014 there have been issues affecting numbers of employees in workplace which have given rise to campaigns for resolution.

For example: Qld Motorways Holdings which has been sold to a consortium of companies including Transurban and AustralianSuper along with other offshore entities. Members are working on a range of strategies to ensure Queensland jobs stay in Queensland.

Building strength and ensuring structures within workplaces following the conclusion or resolution of issues or negotiations is crucial to the ongoing growth of the Union.

Delegate development across the many work sites in the private sector currently targeted has seen an unprecedented growth in the number of new Delegates, current Delegates attending training and members stepping up to take on members concerns.

Opportunities arise for a variety of reasons which bring new workplaces to the attention of the Union. On some occasions this is due to workers identifying issues and recognising the need for Union strength and on other occasions opportunities arise through the national union.

Greater Building Society sites, Star Track Express, BUPA, Flight Centre shop fronts and corporate offices, Medicare Locals are just some of the workplaces where opportunities currently exist.

Qantas Update

Alan Joyce, the CEO of Qantas drops a bombshell on workers across Australia by cutting 5000 jobs from our national airline.

An ASU member from Qantas said “if you don’t employ Australian workers and you are not owned by Australians then how can you call yourself an Australian airline?”

We have all grown up with the concept that Qantas is our national airline. It is an icon, we can all hum the signature tune and for some a tear of pride wells when you hear it.

For many of you the kangaroo sign has been a relief when you are travelling abroad, as once you see the kangaroo you know you are not that far from home.

Whilst this could all be seen to be sentimental in the hard industrial environment that airlines workers operate in today, it is the reality that the national airline of Australia is pushing for higher levels of foreign ownership and easier off-shoring of Australian jobs.

It has been identified through national consultation with the ASU on the Joyce announcement that there is no clear plan to deliver the job cuts or the savings to the business.

Since the announcement Qantas has cut over 1300 ASU covered jobs including the Telesales employees who will be exiting the business between now and an unknown time in 2016.

The areas affected in Qantas so far are:
  a. Airports
  b. Call centres – Brisbane and Melbourne closing with some increase to staffing numbers in Hobart. The Qantas Auckland call centre will become the emergency contact point for any Qantas emergencies in Australia. Currently this is done by the Brisbane centre as the first contact point.
  c. Industry sales
  d. Engineering
  e. Heavy maintenance
  f. Finance and Admin

In each of these areas Qantas has failed to deliver a plan to ensure that the least number of jobs were lost, failed to ensure the well-being of Qantas employees which is exampled by the Telesales staff finding out they were being closed in Brisbane and Melbourne through the media.

ASU Assistant national Secretary Linda White said: “this has been a disgusting process so far.”

We told Qantas in no uncertain terms how disgusted we were about the way in which they handled the announcement of the closure of the Brisbane and Melbourne Telesales Centres.

Someone associated with the decision tipped off both the media and state politicians before the staff or the ASU were advised of the decision, and so many staff who were not at work heard about the closure for the first time on the radio or on social media.

Despite assurances that Qantas would not release the information to the media first, it happened and they should be condemned for their contempt for staff facing job losses.

Qantas tried to say it was not their fault and didn’t come from them but as the company has form in this area, their pathetic denials have to be measured against our past experience.
We also condemned them for the significant misinformation given by some managers about entitlements, redundancy calculations and the process.

Given there had been NO consultation with the ASU about the decision or process what will or will not happen is a matter of extensive negotiation which we intend to consult ASU members about this week.

To add insult to injury Qantas continues to seek federal parliament legislate changes the Qantas Sales Act to potentially create the opportunity for jobs to be off shored and ownership of Qantas to be not Australian.

ASU Delegates have been at the forefront of the consultations with Qantas management in an effort to make sense of this debacle. The fight continues.

ASU Qantas members need your help to ensure federal MP’s and Senators know what is at stake if changes to the Qantas Sale Act are implemented.

Go to: [http://www.australianunions.org.au/save_qantas_jobs](http://www.australianunions.org.au/save_qantas_jobs) and show your support to keep jobs in Australia!

### Aged Care Industry Change Consultation – It’s Your Right

**Aged Care Organisations are gearing up for the federal government’s My Aged Care changes which take effect from 1 July 2014.**

The changes effectively mean that clients now have more choice in how their caring needs are serviced and delivered.

In preparation for the legislative changes, organisations across Queensland have been preparing themselves to be in the best shape to be able to accommodate these changes and be the provider of choice for existing and future clients.

A downside effect of this has been the restructuring and shift within organizations affecting how ASU members work. Unfortunately, this has resulted in the loss of jobs in some instances.

Whilst some workplace change is inevitable, nobody accepts the failure of organizations to consult with workers and their unions in a genuine and meaningful way, particularly when the push for efficiencies leads to redundancies and relocations.

Early this year, the ASU sought intervention from the Fair Work Commission to force BlueCare Sunshine Coast to consult and provide us with relevant information about the changes they were introducing for the Gympie region.

Our efforts were successful and since then BlueCare Sunshine Coast have engaged with ASU members further as they consider change within the Sunshine Coast Region.

Don’t just accept change that adversely affects you – talk to the union office to protect your rights and your job.

### The human cost of non-consultation in the workplace...

**Our Delegate at BlueCare, Shane Daly shares his views below.**

One of the costs that many employers overlook as they go in search of overhead reductions and restructuring is the human cost.

It is very easy for companies to look at people as just another resource (ie, the current terminology of Human Resource), when in reality people are far more important than the computers, printers, stationery and other resources used in the workplace everyday and should be treated as such.

In this time of downturn and tight finances, workers who are affected by their company’s cost cutting/ rationalisation decisions deserve the courtesy of consultation and assistance and the right to have their union involved if they so choose. Unions are after all there to support their members and ensure that the members are being looked after and treated fairly in this difficult time. Nothing is worse than surprises being dropped on people without notice and those people not knowing where they can turn to for assistance.

This is especially important today when mental health issues and substance abuse are becoming huge issues in society and the opportunities for re-employment for people over the age of 50 years are becoming much harder to find.

Consultation and communication, two very important words that if put into practice, can help make this very difficult road that little bit easier for those involved.
GLAM IN 2014

Amazed would be the word best summing up the first half of 2014.

Changes across the world both positive and negative have kept issues for on the front pages of the media.

Marriage equality rights, jail sentences and horrific punishments for homosexual activity on the rise in some countries and stories of successful people finally finding their way to decide it is okay to be open about identifying as LGBT.

A terrific story comes from Eurovision, yes, a possible stereotype event for “the gays”. But this year saw an openly transgender person win the song contest and not for the first time. In 1998 Israel, Dana International – Diva took out the contest.

As visibility for transgender members of the community has become a real discussion, this year’s winner, Conchita has put herself strongly in the focus of media attention as a transgender person with the intention, not only to win the contest, but to show the world there is plenty to be proud of as a transgender person.

Many Unions around the world, including the ASU, have looked to ensure that inclusion of transgender members issues are able to be dealt with. For some workers, their concerns as to whether their union would understand their issues in particular, are being directly addressed by many unions.

Often the impacts of issues such as those for transgender workers, federal or state budgets that do not recognise specific issues for LGBT workers, cuts to services, closure of public health promotion and direct care services, tougher social security measures which impact on marginalised groups within the community, need to be identified and understood.

The ASU is looking to form a working party of interested LGBT members to work on a series of materials for all members, Delegates and workplaces focusing on rights for LGBT workers. For more information contact GLAM rep, Jo Justo via email at: info@qld.asu.net.au

Don’t forget one of the highlights for the second half of 2014 is the Brisbane Pride and Fair Day, 20th September 2014 – the month of September is devoted to Pride Festival activities!

If you believe you are or you know of someone who is being harassed or being discriminated against due to their gender or sexuality, please call 1800 177 244.
2014-15 Membership Fees

New fees for a stronger union.

2014/2015 Fee Structure
Each year your elected workplace representatives set the membership fees for the next financial year.

The new 2014/15 fee structure will allow union members to continue to campaign on the issues that matter to them in their local areas and for our union to grow stronger to meet the challenges over the next year and win.

The new fees come into place from 1 July, 2014.

The details of the fee structure for the calendar year are outlined below.

Still paying union fees through payroll deductions? Now it’s crunch time.

The state government has stripped away payroll deduction for union fees, so now it’s time to pay by direct debit.

If you are still paying your fees by payroll deduction, or you know a member who is, you can change over via our secure online form - https://secure.together.org.au/update-details/

Your Membership Fees Are Fully Tax Deductible
All union membership fees are fully tax deductible ie. a claimable item on your tax return every year, putting you in front at tax time.

Pre-existing Issues
Members who are experiencing issues in their workplace which pre-date their union membership, or whose membership had lapsed at the time the issue arose, or is in arrears may not be eligible for assistance.

Where possible advice will be provided as to how members can progress or seek resolution to their matter.

It is very important to remain a financial member, therefore you must advise the union of any changes in your employment circumstances within two weeks.

For further information, please visit: www.together.org.au/help-at-work/industrial-assistance/ and click on Industrial Assistance Policy.

Note: Members must be financial to access assistance from the union.

*The Together Professional Indemnity Levy is paid by Queensland Health employees (except for admin staff, doctors, dentists and corporate office) plus all therapists working in Housing, Education Queensland or the private sector. Some workers in Disability Services Queensland (DSQ) are also covered. Please call 1800 177 244 if you are unsure if your occupational group pays the levy as part of their union fees. **Includes legal expenses group insurance for Custodial Corrections officers.

PLEASE NOTE: Together-ASU Queensland fees are revised each financial year. This Authority remains until Together receives a cancellation, with 2 weeks notice, in writing and covers any future increases in subscriptions.

Don’t put up with illegal behavior by your employer.

Please contact your union Delegate or phone the union office on 1800 177 244 if you feel you are being threatened to agree to something that would disadvantage you or that compromises safety in your workplace.
Law Firm Contact Centre Restructure

How can you get consultation back on the agenda when management announce significant change?

A large and growing law firm recently underwent restructuring as they began to consolidate a number of acquisitions. The restructure of several Contact Centres was announced on the 3 April 2014.

This issue resonated with not only our ASU members in the contact centres but across the entire workplace with a number of people joining the Union to support their Delegates in their efforts to negotiate a positive outcome for members.

After discussions with ASU reps, management placed on hold on the restructure to allow us to consult with our members.

Then a meeting was held between the ASU, Delegates and HR in relation to the future operating model for the Contact Centres.

The outcomes were as follows:
- management confirmed that no decision had been made about the restructure Contact Centres.
- management have taken into account the feedback of the workforce and it has been decided that the Local Consultative Committees would be resourced with an extra 2 full time members of staff - this is a great win for the LCCs.
- management confirmed that the assessment of the locations of the Local Contact Centres would conclude in early July 2014;

A further meeting has been scheduled with ASU officials, Delegates and management on 4 July 2014 to discuss with them the review outcomes which have not negatively affected members.

This is a great win for our members and shows the power of working together to achieve a terrific outcome.

If your employer tells you they are restructuring or changing your work – REMEMBER – they have a duty to consult – Let us know!

Senate Inquiry Success!

In 2012 your union made a submission to the Senate Inquiry into Workplace Bullying. We were then invited to present directly to the Senate hearing when they were in Brisbane.

Ofﬁcials were accompanied by a number of very brave members who came forward to tell their stories to the Senators. The crux of our submission was that:

In Australia, we have laws that go towards protecting workers’ rights under the Fair Work Act, and these laws allow unions to apply for good faith bargaining orders, raise disputes around a range of industrial issues, and represent individual members who need our help. We also have laws that will protect people from discrimination and sexual harassment BUT we have no laws that will stop people bullying each other at work.

This is grossly inadequate and not only seriously damages the workplace, but can injure those workers temporarily or even permanently. We believe that workplace bullying is a workplace issue and the Fair Work Act should deﬁne bullying and provide protections under the Fair Work Act Division 5—Other protections.

On 1 January, 2014 Part 6-4B—Workers Bullied At Work of the Fair Work Act was enacted. This Part allows a union on behalf of a worker who has been bullied at work to apply to the Fair Work Commission for an Order to stop the bullying.

The Fair Work Commission can make Orders in the following terms:
- stopping a group or individuals from continuing the bullying conduct;
- monitoring conduct;
- requiring compliance with the employer’s workplace bullying policy;
- requiring the employer to review their workplace bullying policy; and
- directing the employer to provide information and extra support and training to workers.

The ASU recognises that bullying is a major hazard for our members, and has the potential to be extremely serious and damaging to careers and workers’ health.

The addition to the Fair Work Act is a great win for all workers, and one that the ASU has taken a prominent stand on.
Black Day for Qantas Workers

Media Release
Thursday 27 February 2014

The Australian Services Union has labelled the Qantas decision to shed 5000 full time workers across the Qantas Group as short sighted and has vowed to fight for every job.

ASU Assistant National Secretary Linda White said that the Qantas announcement is devastating for the hard working staff of Qantas and its subsidiaries.

“It’s outrageous that so many Qantas (and Jetstar) staff are going to bear the brunt of the poor business decisions made by Qantas in recent times.

“The ASU will fight for each and every job.

“Qantas have suggested they will seek to freeze wages until they achieve a full year underlying profit. This is an indefinite claim, and front line staff will have no influence over this outcome. It’s punishing the workers for the poor business decisions made by Alan Joyce,” Ms White said.

Queensland ASU Branch Secretary Julie Bignell criticised the decision to shed thousands of jobs from the Qantas group and in particular from Queensland where Qantas workers have undergone significant restructuring and worked with the company to introduce technological change.

“ASU members across the company are front line staff. They’re in customer service, call centres and at check-in desks and in support roles across the airline group,” said Ms Bignell.

“These are the people who make Qantas the company that it is today. They are the reason you fly Qantas and Jetstar.”

“Today’s decision shows a disregard for the loyal hard-working staff who have helped make the Qantas brand so successful. Wages and conditions are not the problem at Qantas, and Qantas should not look to punish working people for the poor business nous of the management group,” she said.

“ASU members across the Qantas group earn modest wages and have always been prepared to adapt to make the airline more efficient. They do not deserve to wear the brunt of poor management decisions.”

“Qantas is putting their reputation and the satisfaction of Australian customers on the line with today’s announcement.” Ms Bignell said

The ASU represents workers in airport check-in, head office, administration and finance, call centres, freight and engineering clerical workers and administrative, operations and technical staff. The ASU is the largest union operating in the Qantas Group covering around one third of the airline’s Australian staff including in Jetstar and QantasLink.
If you’ve been forced to stop work for any medical reason, you might have a Super claim. We’re Australia’s Superannuation experts. And we’ll fight to get you every dollar possible. **Call us now and we’ll check your Super for free.**

**CONTACT US:**

1800 810 812
wefightforfair.com.au

**OFFICES IN:**

Brisbane  Cairns  Mackay  Sunshine Coast
Browns Plains  Gold Coast  Rockhampton  Townsville
Caboolture  Ipswich  Strathpine
Aussie ‘Fair Go’ Elusive for Our Lowest Paid Workers

Australia’s 1.5 million low paid workers and their families are facing tough times ahead following the Fair Work Commission’s decision to only raise the minimum wage by $18.70 a week.

Overall employers didn’t want minimum wages to rise in real terms at all, having sought between no increase at all up to $10 per week – a real wage cut.

The Abbott Government didn’t go into bat for an increase in the minimum wage which is not surprising given they are considering a plan to cut the minimum wage every year for ten years.

Mr Oliver said that as a result of this decision, the national minimum wage will continue falling as a percentage of average weekly earnings from 60% twenty years ago to around 43% now – the lowest proportion on record.

“There needed to be at least a $27 a week increase if we were to turn around the alarming decline in the relative earnings of low paid workers and avoid creating an entrenched ‘US style' working poor within twenty years,” Mr Oliver said.

“What hardworking Australians can see is that at the heart of Tony Abbott’s economic plan – which is to argue that wages are the problem with the Australian economy – is another lie.

“The economic story shows that the Liberals attack on penalty rates, the minimum wage and the Fair Work Act is about their ideology and not based on fact – because the statistics show a strong economy, productivity growth at an above-average pace and wages lagging behind.

“The fact is that Australian workers and their families are actually working harder and falling behind - and their own Government has a policy position to drive down wages, dismantle workplace protections and send jobs off shore.

Source: ACTU modified.
Another Abbott Government Attack on Rights at Work

In yet another example of blind ideology driving the Abbott Government agenda, Attorney-General Brandis in late May, announced another inquiry into workplace laws.

At a time when the Government cemented its vision of a harsher, less equal Australia with its unprecedented attack on the ‘fair go’, we are now faced with a Law Reform Commission inquiry into rights at work, ACTU Assistant Secretary Tim Lyons said.

“The Government has already made it very clear that it is going after the wages and conditions of hard working Australians and now rights at work are in the firing line,” Mr Lyons said.

“They are going after penalty rates, they’re going after rights at work and their assault on welfare, Medicare, education and young people represents the biggest attack on the social wage this country has ever seen.

“This Government has made it clear to hardworking Australians and their families that their lives will get harder at the same time that big business and the wealthy get a free kick.

“In their latest attack on ordinary Australians, Senator Brandis has singled out fundamental workplace rights such as rights to representation, rights to organise and rights to take industrial action for review”.

“It is deeply hypocritical that the terms of reference for this inquiry express concern about laws that restrict “traditional” legal protections like the right to silence at the same time as the Government is trying to force through the ABCC legislation that abrogates those rights for building workers.”

Mr Lyons said there is a huge overlap between the Australian Law Reform Commission review of Commonwealth Laws for Consistency with Traditional Rights, Freedoms and Privileges and the proposed Productivity Commission inquiry into the Fair Work Act for no obvious reason.

“This just proves that the Government is bereft of a positive agenda so is instead spending its time pushing an ideological agenda that will ultimately deliver for their big business mates that want to ride roughshod over working people,” Mr Lyons said.

“This is now the third inquiry into workplace relations and unions from a Government that promised to get rid of red tape.

“Reviewing laws which fail to allow the protection of reputations while using Royal Commissions to damage political enemies is similarly hypocritical.”

Source: ACTU

ASU Annual Compliance Report 2014

Workplace Gender Equality Agency

In accordance with the requirements of the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Act), I am writing to inform you that on the 30th May 2014, the Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union, trading as the Australian Services Union (ASU), lodged its annual public report with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (Agency).

A copy of the report has been published on the ASU National website: http://www.asu.asn.au/about/governance

As an employee of the union, the Act provides for your comment on the report; either to myself at: Julie.Bignell@qld.asu.net.au or to Joanne Knight, National Women’s Consultative Committee Convenor via email: jknight@syd.asu.asn.au or to the Agency.

Please refer to the Agency’s guidelines on their website: www.wgea.gov.au for details of their process.

In Unity, Julie Bignell Branch Secretary
On Sunday 4 May, 2014
ASU-Together members turned out en-masse to celebrate Labour Day in Brisbane.

The Newman government recently moved the Labour Day public holiday to September, but like last year, union members decided to march on the same day that we have for the last hundred years.

The march commenced at 9.30am from Turbot street in the city and finished at the Ekka Showgrounds at around 10.30am, where representatives from community organisations and the Labor Party gave a rousing welcome to our members as they entered the showgrounds.

ASU-Together members enjoyed a free BBQ and refreshments as part of the annual QCU organised family day of fun, including rides and activities for children who attended the march with their parents. Formalities were staged at the Ekka Showgrounds with QCU President, John Battams and State ALP Leader, Anastacia Palaszczuk making speeches condemning the Newman government for its ongoing attacks on our rights as union members.

The ASU-Together tent was full of activity on the day, with members catching up with family, friends and co-workers as well as networking with Delegates and Organisers.

Union volunteers served a sausage sizzle and drinks for members, ensuring that everyone had a great time on our day. Regional ASU members attended events in Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Maryborough, Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Toowoomba, loudly protesting the actions of the conservative federal and state governments in regional areas, and proudly celebrating our movement.

Thanks to all members who attended Labour Day events and to all ASU-Together volunteers for donating their time on the day. You are the union!
Accessing Assistance

To access industrial assistance:

1. See your local Workplace Delegate; OR
2. Access the online assistance section of the union website; OR
3. Phone the union office.

Do you need to explore your options to resolve a workplace issue? Are you a workplace Delegate who has been asked to assist a member locally? Your union office provides members and Delegates with industrial advice and assistance on individual industrial matters from experienced industrial staff.

Members should always consider consulting your local Delegate when you have an issue you would like to talk over and get advice on. Your Delegate will have an understanding of your workplace, its culture and people, as well as up to date knowledge of your Award or Collective Agreement.

Sometimes complex issues require further advice and assistance, your union industrial staff can assist either by advising Delegates on how to best assist members, or by providing direct assistance to the member.

Members can contact industrial staff by emailing: assistance@together.org.au or by phone toll free on 1800 177 244. Skilled union industrial staff are available to answer calls between 8.30am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday, and are committed to ensuring your rights and entitlements are upheld in your workplace.

Industrial Issues

We specialise in advice about a wide range of issues such as:

- Workplace grievances
- Disciplinary processes
- Bullying and harassment
- Discrimination
- Access to correct entitlements
- Performance review processes
- Workplace injuries and illness
- Rehabilitation and return to work
- Workplace health and safety
- Sexual harassment

We believe it is important to provide advice and assistance to financial members to enable them to resolve workplace issues at their local level where-ever possible. Ordinarily, industrial officers would not attend routine work meetings or interim reviews in performance improvement processes, a workplace delegate may assist by attending these meetings with you.

The Process

To ensure we get the full picture before giving you advice, we need members requiring ongoing advice or assistance to complete an Industrial Assistance Form. You can access this form at: www.together.org.au/help-at-work/industrial-assistance/

Completion of the Industrial Assistance Form allows the member to provide all of the relevant details of their workplace issue, as well as relevant documentation, to an industrial officer. Relevant documents may include correspondence from their employer regarding discipline or warnings, policies relating to their issue, or medical certificates.

Providing sufficient information on your issue and supporting documentation allows our industrial staff to provide the member with advice and assistance that is both timely and accurate.

After receipt of your form, you will be contacted by a member of your union’s industrial staff within four working days. If your matter is urgent, or you have a meeting date or deadline approaching, please complete the section on the form marked “Have you got an urgent meeting date/deadline about this issue? If so when?” This will allow for every effort to be made to assign your matter to an industrial officer as quickly as possible. Members with individual issues should remember to brief their local Delegate if there is a deadline involved as they may also be able to assist with immediate matters.

Resolution of a Matter

Once an industrial officer is assigned to a matter, they will, where possible, see the matter through to its final resolution. At all times, the industrial officer will provide confidential advice on the prospects of successful resolution. In some limited circumstances, the union office may be unable to provide further assistance on a matter. If this situation arises, the industrial officer will advise you of alternative options.

Legal Advice

Your union’s industrial staff provide quality industrial advice about workplace related issues. They do not provide legal advice.

Financial members can access free or discounted legal advice from our preferred providers. Please be aware that it is your choice as to whether your lawyer or your union’s industrial staff act as your representative with your employer, you cannot have two representatives for the same matter with your employer. This avoids possible conflicts.

Pre-existing Issues

Members who are experiencing issues in their workplace which pre-date their union membership, or whose membership had lapsed at the time the issue arose, will only be eligible for advice by phone or email. Where possible advice will be provided as to how members can progress or seek resolution to their matter. It is very important to remain a financial member, therefore you must advise the union of any changes in your employment circumstances.

For further information, please visit: www.together.org.au/help-at-work/industrial-assistance/ and click on Industrial Assistance Policy.

More information about accessing help is available on our website.
Global Unions Rank Australia with Chile, Ghana on Labour Rights

Australia has been named as a “country of concern” at the opening of the third congress of the International Trade Union Confederation in Berlin, along with the more usual targets of criticism.

On May 19 the ITUC released its first global ranking of rights, which rated countries from 1, with the best rights, to the worst, such as Cambodia, which is rated 5.

Australia received a ranking of 3 for “regular violations of rights”, along with 33 countries, including Chile, Ghana, Canada, Singapore and the UK (the US and Mexico are the only OECD nations among the 30 countries to achieve a rating of 4).

Countries earning a rating of 3 regularly interfere in collective labour rights “or are failing to fully guarantee important aspects of these rights. There are deficiencies in laws and/or certain practices which make frequent violations possible”, according to the ITUC report.

The ITUC says Denmark is the only country to achieve “a perfect score of zero for respecting all 97 indicators of workers’ fundamental rights”.

The peak body has also released an opinion poll, conducted across 14 countries, including Australia, found that 84% of respondents felt that “ordinary citizens” do not have enough influence in global decision-making.

The poll found 68% think their government is doing a bad job at tackling unemployment, 78% believe the economic system favours the wealthy rather than the majority and more than half rate the economic situation in their country as bad.

More than 1500 trade unionists from 161 countries attended the conference. The ITUC represents 375 national trade unions, with some 175 million members.

Source: ACTU
Federal Government makes changes to Higher Education.

From 2016, the changes announced in the federal budget would end tertiary education in Australia as we know it.

Instead of the government funding universities, it will essentially be up to institutions to raise their own money by charging students.

Some of the changes include:
- Changing the indexation methods for University Grants to be in line with CPI, rather than the Higher Education Grants Index;
- Deregulating fees that Universities can charge students;
- Cutting funding for Commonwealth Supported Places by 20% on average;
- Opening up the funding of Commonwealth Supported Places to the non-University sector including for profit organisations; and
- Opening up funding of Commonwealth Supported Places to Sub-Bachelor higher education qualifications.

Quality Assurances

The Government has introduced a bill that would strip the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency’s role in performing quality audits of courses in Higher Education. This could damage the University sector’s reputation, especially in the important international sector.

Maintaining high standards will be made all the more difficult with public funding going to a wider circle of educational organisations, including for-profit organisations. We have seen the problems this has caused in the Vocational Sector and it is important this is not repeated in the tertiary sector.

The Queensland Government in 1996-98 opened up public funding to private Vocational Training Organisations, and the sector became riddled with poor quality training. On numerous occasions the state government had to intervene to ensure students in public-funded courses were able to complete their training after the training organisation failed quality audits.

With nobody available to undertake quality audits in the tertiary sector and public funding going to a wider range of training organisations including for-profit organisations, the public will have no way of ensuring that their money is going to support a high quality tertiary education sector.

What do you think?

As a union we can lobby politicians, respond in the media and create public debate. But first and most importantly we need to know what you are most concerned about. Members in higher education can have their say about what this budget means to them by emailing: universities@together.org.au
James Cook University


The Agreement provided the following improvements in conditions:

Wages
- 3% from 1 June 2013
- 3% from 1 June 2014
- 3% from 1 June 2015
- 3% from 1 June 2016

Loading for Professional staff
- Professional staff performing academic work will be able to apply for the loading, if approved the loading will equal the difference between their professional classification and the appropriate academic classification and will apply for the proportion of their time they perform academic work.

Internal Advertising
- Professional positions between HEW 2-5 will normally be advertised internally for 7 days prior to being advertised externally.

Griffith University

Enterprise Bargaining
The Griffith University General Staff Enterprise Agreement was certified in Fair Work Australia in February 2014.

The new Agreement included the following achievements:
- 2% wage increase administratively paid from 1 January, 2013; and a further 1% paid administratively in December and backdated to 1 October 2013;
- 3% wage increase from 1 January 2014;
- 3% wage increase from 1 January 2015;
- 3% wage increase from 1 January 2016;
- An increase from 10% to 15% loading for staff who do the majority of their work between 2pm-11pm.
- Clause on workplace bullying and harassment in accordance with our claim.
- Special leave arrangements for workers who are experiencing domestic and family violence.
- Retrenchment calculations to be pro-rata for employees with periods of full-time service even if they are part time at the date of separation.

INS Change
A major organisational change has been proposed for the Division of Information Services. ASU-Together and United Voice members submitted detailed feedback on the proposal. In the first week of June, the final proposal was released and implementation set to begin in late June.

Queensland University of Technology

Enterprise Bargaining
Staff at QUT have voted for a new Agreement and we are now awaiting certification in the FWC. It provides for the following improvements in conditions:

Wage Increases
- 3% from 1 December 2013 (paid administratively)
- 3% from 1 December 2014
- 3% from 1 December 2015
- 3% from 1 December 2016

Union negotiators were successful in achieving a major shift in long service leave conditions. Staff will now only need to have 7 years continuous service to be eligible for long service leave. The previous requirement was 10 years continuous service. This is a significant improvement and has been part of ASU-Together’s log of claim in previous bargaining rounds.

University of Queensland

Enterprise Bargaining
Members have endorsed in-principle position reached in negotiations. It is anticipated staff will be voting on the Agreement in June. It provides the following improvement in conditions:

Wage Increases
- 1 July 2014 — 0.5%
- 1 January 2015 — 3%
- 1 January 2016 — 3%
- 1 January 2017 — 3%.

- This is in addition to the 2.5% wage increase administratively paid to staff on 1 January 2014.

Organisational Change
The appropriate consultative committee will perform the role previously performed by the standing committee, so the provisions in the Agreement that to ensure proposed changes are justified, that consultation with staff has occurred, and that workload issues considered remain.

Retirement age
The Agreement includes a commitment that no staff will have any compulsory retirement age provision enforced upon them.

Ipswich campus transfer
The University has announced that it is transferring the land and buildings on the Ipswich campus to the University of Southern Queensland – there is currently a non-binding agreement in place with USQ in regards to this. UQ hopes to have firm agreement with USQ in place in late July, 2014. Employees will go through the normal UQ change management processes and we will be working actively with the University to maximise employment through redeployment opportunities. We have also written to the VC of USQ to set up meetings to explore employment opportunities.

Advertised positions
The close scrutiny by union delegates of advertised fixed term positions has identified a number of positions that should have been continuing positions, as a result of the diligence of the Delegates we have been able to ensure that these positions remain continuing positions.

University of Southern Queensland
Enterprise Bargaining - Progress Report
The University of Southern Queensland has made the following offer in enterprise bargaining negotiations:-
- A 3% salary increase effective from 14 June 2014;
- A 3% salary increase effective from 13 June 2015;
- A 3% salary increase effective from 11 June 2016; and
- A 3% salary increase effective from 10 June 2017.

Discussions are continuing.
LNP WorkCover Changes Hand Over More at Expense of Injured Workers

The recent dismantling of WorkCover shows the Newman LNP Government is handing out corporate welfare at the expense of injured workers and their rights at work.

Queensland Council of Unions general secretary Ron Monaghan says the changes to premiums will take compensation away from injured workers and their families.

“Taking away rights from injured workers is giving Newman the cover to deliver this $1 billion windfall to employers,” he said.

Employers will also have their claims history wiped clean while any workers’ compensation claims by employees are now openly accessible to bosses.

“It is another free kick for dodgy employers who want to shirk their responsibility to maintain safe workplaces,” Mr Monaghan said.

“This amnesty for negligent bosses must also anger those many diligent employers who have spent time and energy on ensuring workplaces comply with safety rules.”

Injured workers who are forced onto disability income face a bleak future, with the surprise federal budget cuts to disability pensions.

Mr Monaghan said the combination of reductions to WorkCover and slashing disability benefits would destroy the families of some injured workers.

“While dodgy bosses get off scott free, injured workers are left carrying the burden of the LNP’s debt to the big end of town,” he said.

“Attorney-General Bleijie overturned the decision of a Parliamentary committee to keep WorkCover intact, he showed his priorities lie with employer groups and not with the injured workers of Queensland.”

Changes last October to WorkCover removed the rights of more than half of all injured workers to sue dodgy bosses.

Mr Monaghan predicted the LNP’s treatment of injured workers would be a campaign focus at the next state election.

Source: QCU

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Been Told by Your Employer to Attend their Doctor Recently?

If you’ve been injured or on extended sick leave and told by your employer to hand over medical information or to see their doctor, what are your rights?

While employers need to make sure their employees are medically fit to do their job, a request to provide medical information or attend a doctor is a different matter and one that needs to be carefully weighed up. Put simply, for the request to be lawful there must be a real need for it.

Each case is different and there are many things to consider in deciding if being asked to see your employer’s doctor or provide medical information is really needed.

As a general rule, if you’re asked about a medical condition that doesn’t affect your ability to do your job, then you usually do not have to provide any information. However, if your condition does impact your ability to do your job or may impact on what you need to do to comply with WH&S then you may have to discuss this… but seek advice first!

So what if you’re asked to attend your employer’s doctor?

Don’t lie to your employer! Instead, tell them you will get back to them and call your union. The ASU can help you to get more information about why this may be needed, and give you some help on what questions you can expect, what information you may be asked to hand over and what this may mean in terms of your ability to do your job.

If you do have to see a doctor, your employer should cover the cost even though they don’t attend. It is generally not lawful for an employer to insist they come to the doctor’s appointment with you.

Involving your union is an important way to make sure you know your rights if you find yourself in this situation. It also shows your employer that you’re taking the matter seriously, so they may be more careful about doing the right thing.

If more specific advice is needed, the ASU will speak with Maurice Blackburn’s employment lawyers, who can help all ASU members with free legal advice and an assessment of their case. Many medical conditions mean members will be entitled to claim, for example on their super fund or workers’ compensation.

If you have any questions about your rights about doctor visits and medical records, please call the ASU on 1800 177 244 [or our lawyers, Maurice Blackburn, on 1800 810 812 for free advice].
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