The fight for Jobs continues!

ASU members continue to be amazed at the lack of decency by Allan Joyce and the Qantas board when it comes to sticking to their word.

The national carrier announced in May that its massive restructure would not result in Australian jobs being offshored. One of the major call centres to be effected by the Qantas announcement was the Brisbane Call Centre where a large number of our members are employed at Qantas telesales. There was a clear and firm undertaking provided by management that the jobs that would be moved after the closure of the Brisbane and Melbourne Centre to Hobart would not be offshored and would move to Tasmania. Whilst we were devastated by the announcement at least members could take some solace in the fact that they had an option to relocate if it suited them or that other workers in Hobart would potentially benefit from the restructure.

The outrageous back flip by Qantas is another example of the failure of management to properly manage this airline.

Thousands of ASU members have signed a petition calling on CEO Alan Joyce and the Board to immediately reverse their decision to offshore jobs to Tasmania and abide by their promises. Well done if you are one of those members who have signed the petition. If not there is still time so jump on line now (CLICK HERE) and join the thousands of voices calling for an end to the broken promises and lies.
2014 Emma Miller Award Recipient

Private Health Delegate, Beth Barnes is our worthy 2014 Emma Miller Award Recipient.

When asked what three words best described Beth – ASU Acting Branch Secretary, Irene Monro said of Beth, she is a Leader, Achiever and Motivator.

Beth, who works at St. Andrews Private Hospital has been a member of the union for more than 10 years and holds positions on the Union’s Executive, Women’s Committee, Council as well as campaigning within the private sector. Her tireless work ethic is a real example for others to follow.

Beth has lead ASU Administration members through challenging negotiations which included three ‘No’ votes and one scope order – which all had successful outcomes for members! Beth is a silent achiever, who strives to ensure members achieve just outcomes with the minimum amount of fuss.

As a quiet, strong leader, Beth motivates administration staff to understand Union, Act Union and to stay strong when facing actions by employer groups bent on reducing the wages and conditions of workers. Beth’s wisdom, direction and strategy setting is pure inspiration when campaigning on behalf of members.

Below from left is a very proud Aunt, Mrs Ann McKenzie with ASU Acting Branch Secretary, Irene Monro, an ecstatic Beth Barnes and ASU Industrial Advocate, Jan Sheppard at the Emma Miller Award ceremony.

The fight for job security is well and truly the most important issue for members as we see Delegates taking up the job security issue not only in Qantas but in Universities, the TAFE system, Tolling Companies (QLD Motorways) just to name a few.

It is of great concern to see the rampant attacks on employee’s job security and we have been working closely with Delegates and members over the past months stopping employers from flagrantly ignoring consultative processes required by law to deal with restructures and redundancies in the workplace. The significant majority of Collective Agreements have formal consultative and notification processes employers are required to undertake before workplace changes are implemented which could result in job losses. We must be vigilant and ensure that employers follow these requirements. Please contact the union office urgently if you believe that a workplace change is about to occur at your workplace. It is only by being part of a strong Union that you will receive your full legal entitlements.

Whilst our endeavours to work with Delegates and members continue and our fight for job security escalates we pause to reflect on the contribution of a great leader, and inspirational man Gough Whitlam. Much has been said and deserved tributes overflowing about the extraordinary contribution to our society by Gough Whitlam. As we stand side by side with other Unions and the community to defend the very ideals so vigorously advance by Gough Whitlam - access to University education and Medicare we must do more than remember and celebrate this great man. We must act as courageously as he did and fight for the preservation of an accessible University system for all, and a universal health care system that does not discriminate based on your financial circumstances. We remember your legacy Gough Whitlam but most importantly we promise to keep up the fight.

In Unity,

Irene Monro
Acting Branch Secretary

>>> continued from previous page

We remember your legacy Gough Whitlam but most importantly we promise to keep up the fight.
In a glaring statement about income inequality, the nine richest Australians now have greater net worth than the poorest 4.5 million Australians.

The richest 1% of our country’s population now owns the same collective wealth as the bottom 60%, according to figures in a new Oxfam Australia report designed to boost the case for worldwide action to reduce the gap between rich and poor.

The recently released report follows on from previously published information from Oxfam International that the world’s 85 richest people now own as much as half of the entire world’s population, approximately 3.5bn people.

The report stated that income inequality in Australia has been rising since the mid-1990s, however, at the same time, all Australians had experienced some form of increase in income over this period of time. The report went on to state that in the mid 90s we had an average level of inequality in comparison to other OECD countries, yet today, with a better performing economy our level of equality has fallen to below average.

The Oxfam report said that whilst economic growth was essential to drive progress, extreme wealth concentrated in the hands of a few individuals had the capacity to hinder hundreds of millions of people from around the world from capitalising on the benefits of their hard work and talent.

Oxfam Australia chief executive, Dr Helen Szoke, said Australia as the host of November’s G20 meeting in Brisbane could put inequality on the agenda.

“It’s about what role can Australia play in ensuring that gap doesn’t grow so big that we have major problems globally in the future,” she said.

Dr Szoke said a recent Oxfam-commissioned poll of 1,016 people across Australia found that 79% of people surveyed felt the gap between the rich and the poor had widened over the past decade, with the large majority of those people saying that it has now made Australia a difficult place to live.

The Research Now poll, conducted between 28 May and 2 June 2014, showed respondents wanted Australia to lead the way in cracking down on tax avoidance by large multi-national companies operating in Australia by way of shifting profits earned in Australia to overseas countries and tax havens where there were more favourable taxation obligations.

Dr Szoke stated that what is happening globally and in Australia is that the gap is widening between the richest and the poorest people.

She said, “We’re not arguing for equality … our point is not to leave the poorest people behind, whether domestically or globally.”


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Government plan for Australia’s future rests on cuts to wages and conditions

The Abbott Government’s competitiveness agenda delivers for the business lobby but gives cold comfort to ordinary working Australians, ACTU President Ged Kearney said.

“Job creation and higher living standards are not borne out of an agenda to cut wages and conditions,” Ms Kearney said.

Unions have always maintained that employers must show they have tested the labour market locally before looking for workers overseas, while employers who do recruit workers on 457 visas must also invest in training local workers as well.

“Job creation and higher living standards are not borne out of an agenda to cut wages and conditions,” Ms Kearney said.

You can now follow the ASU on Facebook & Twitter!

ASU Central & Southern Queensland Clerical & Administrative Branch members can now follow their branch on Facebook and Twitter. Click the links below to go to our Facebook and Twitter pages.

https://www.facebook.com/pages/Australian-Services-Union-Central-Southern-Qld-Branch/668425026584126
https://twitter.com/ASUCSQBranch

Australian Services Union
Dept. of Employment Data Confirms Bargained Wage Rises Moderate

According to recently released data from the Department of Employment in relation to March and June quarter outcomes, wage rises in private sector federal enterprise agreements only grew at levels below the post GFC average.

The March Trends in Federal Enterprise Bargaining Report reveals that approval of 1197 private sector enterprise agreements covering 121,000 employees gave an average wage annualised increases of 3.6% over a three year term.

Whilst this result is consistent with rises over the previous three quarters, it is considerably lower than the 3.9% average achieved since 2009 when the economy started to recover from the worst of the GFC.

In comparison, the March 2014 quarter was 3.6 percent, up from 3.5 percent in the December 2013 quarter, but down by 0.2 percentage points from the March quarter 2013.

Meanwhile, wages growth under federal agreements approved for the June 2014 quarter fell compared to the March 2014 quarter, with the Average Annualised Wage Increase (AAWI) in the June quarter 2014 being 3.3 percent, down from 3.6 percent in the March quarter 2014, but unchanged compared to the June 2013 quarter.

A total of 1310 agreements were approved in the June quarter 2014, covering 142,000 employees, which is low relative to an average of 1782 agreements approved each quarter since the Fair Work Act commenced on 1 July 2009.

The above wages growth figures confirm that pay rates are only growing modestly and at a rate below inflation. The figures preceded an unexpected spike in the unemployment rate to 6.4 per cent in July 2014, and mean most Australians effectively took a pay cut during the three months to the end of June with the purchasing power of those wages declining.


ABS – Productivity Increases Continue

In a continuation of Australia’s ongoing productivity increases, Private Sector productivity grew by 3.3% in the year to June, ABS figures reveal.

This exposes the Abbott government’s running commentary on falling productivity as a beat-up that is designed to support the Business Council’s objective of lowering wages for ordinary Australians.

By definition, Labour productivity is calculated as Gross Domestic Product per hour worked and can be measured across various industry sectors or over the whole economy.

Wages growth is at fairly low levels compared with recent years, however labour productivity has grown, the rate of growth has risen and fallen over the last two decades. This is where Abbott and cohorts derive much of their negative spin from.

The ABS national accounts data for the June 2014 quarter shows that gross value added per hour worked in the market sector grew by 0.9% in the three-month period, and 3.3% in trend terms for the 12 months, marking 14 quarters of straight growth.

GDP per hour worked - which reflects the contributions to productivity of labour, capital and other factors including managerial efficiency - rose 0.6% in trend terms for the quarter and 2.6% for the year.

Abbott and co would have you believe that management is solely responsible for this ‘growth’, because that’s what it is, and that ordinary workers are not actually producing enough output. And a cut in wages will fix that situation?

Many business lobbyists falsely cite Australia’s ‘poor productivity growth’ (read, not at historical highs) and confuse it with multi factor productivity declines in certain sectors purely to facilitate calls for labour market deregulation ie: calls for cutting unfair dismissal laws, overtime, wages restraint and other minimum standards.

The reality is such lobbyists and their masters are too lazy to innovate. They are simply managers trying to solve problems rather than leaders looking for and providing real answers.

A report released last year by the McKell Institute, ‘Understanding Productivity – Australia’s Choice’, and compiled by Professor Roy Green, Dr Philip Toner and Dr Renu Agarwal, comprehensively debunks a range of cherished BCA/ LNP myths surrounding our so called ‘productivity decline’.

In his assessment, Peter Bentley – Executive Director of The McKell Institute says that the report finds
no evidence to support claims that a
decline in productivity has been a result
of changes to Australia’s industrial
relations regime or excessive business
regulation.

However, he says the report does
find the period of most significant
productivity decline in Australia
coincided with the most radical
deregulation of the labour market –
WorkChoices, which in your union’s
opinion is better described as ‘one big
wage cut’.

Mr Bentley also says the report shows
that Australia’s multi factor productivity
(MFP) decline over the last decade, far
from being generalised, is the result of
large falls in a small number of specific
industries, notably mining, agriculture
and utilities and that unprecedented
capital spends in the mining industry,
for example, have driven down our
national MFP averages significantly.

Mr Bentley says that we need to take a
step back and acknowledge there are
two distinct approaches Australia can
take toward productivity improvement:
a high road and a low road.

He says the low road involves cost
cutting, further deregulation and, an
almost certainly un-winnable race to
the bottom.

WorkChoices has already proven
that road does not lead to higher
productivity, but instead lowers living
standards via lower wages and provides
much less incentive to produce.

Mr Bentley says that the high road, on
the other hand, involves improving the
education and training of managers
and the workforce, creating efficiency
gains through innovation, and better
utilising the skills we currently have to
harness their actual potential.

He says these concepts can appear
woolly in the abstract, but asks us to
consider, for example, the impact of
technology has had on the world of work
in the last decade. Video conferencing
now allows meetings to convene from
different corners of the country without
half a day wasted getting to and from
the airport. People have the capacity to
follow up on emails while waiting for a
late appointment, instead of simply re-
reading the newspaper.

These are all productivity gains derived
from innovation and changes to work
practices.

However, Abbott, Hockey, Hunt and
Abbetz are still trapped in the past
and beholden to getting the most out
of yesterday instead of innovating for
the future. No science minister? No
investment in green technology? No
investment in solar energy? Reducing
our living standards via retrograde
industrial legislation? Simply giving up
on Australian manufacturing? Why?
Because they truly don’t have an answer
for the future, let alone today, and they
don’t have the capacity to harness
innovation, instead just a stubborn
belief in out-of-date ideology.

You can check out the McKell Institute
report at the links below.

Source: ABS - National Accounts: National
Income, Expenditure & Product June Quarter
2014
http://mckellinstitute.org.au/understanding-
productivity-australias-choice
http://mckellinstitute.org.au/the-high-road-
versus-the-low-road-on-productivity

The big banks are the first to say they have the best home loans. But with no hidden costs, lower fees and the best
rate up front, our home loan customers have been better off for more than 10 years*. Isn’t it time you switched to
a fairer home loan?

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<th>Standard Variable Rate</th>
<th>Tailored Variable Rate</th>
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The McKell Institute report is available at the links below.

http://mckellinstitute.org.au/understanding-productivity-australias-choice

*Data: InfoChoice. Savings calculated on a 30 year; $300,000 principal and interest home loan after 10 years (01/02/03-01/02/13) on the ME Bank SMHL Standard Variable Rate versus the standard variable home loan rates of ANZ, CBA, NAB and Westpac. Assumes the same monthly repayment is made to each loan, based on the minimum repayment of the loan with the higher interest rate. Interest calculated daily and applied monthly. Graph and calculations do not include applicable fees, charges or discounts and do not consider other home loan products from these lenders that may carry different interest rates. Terms, conditions, fees and charges apply. Applications are subject to credit approval. Members Equity Bank Pty Ltd ABN 56 070 887 679 Australian Credit Licence 229500.
Unions are pushing to give more than two million casual workers in Australia the right to become permanent employees.

In making the announcement on World Day for Decent Work, ACTU President Ged Kearney said it was unfair that many casuals work regular shifts and rosters but miss out on important entitlements like sick leave and annual leave.

“Unions are pushing to have a clause entered into modern awards that will allow casual employees to become permanent staff members,” said Ms Kearney.

“This will recognise people who are permanent workers in everything but name.”

The ACTU is preparing to lodge the claim with the Fair Work Commission under the review of the modern award system that is currently underway.

There are 2.2 million casual workers (19% of the workforce) in Australia according to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures released in May.

“That’s one in five Australian workers who deserve the respect and recognition of decent work,” said Ms Kearney.

“People are not just tools for employers to use - they have lives and families and deserve to be given the respect of decent, secure work”.

“Casual employees, even if they are working regular hours, live with the knowledge that their jobs are not secure. This makes it harder for them to get loans, rent a house and get access to training and promotion opportunities.”

Ms Kearney said the clause would be cost neutral for employers.

“Employers already pay casual workers a loading to make up for them not having sick or holiday pay – so making people permanent will simply give workers those entitlements at no extra cost.”

Ms Kearney said the proposed change is targeted at workers who are permanent in everything but name, not genuine casuals such as students who work irregular shifts in bars or restaurants.

“This is about the teachers, receptionists, disability support and aged care workers who are already genuinely working permanent hours and deserve to have that recognised.

“If it walks like a duck and quacks like a duck – it’s not a rooster. These workers are permanent in all but name and recognition of entitlements,” she said.

The ACTU will lodge its submission for the casuals claim with the Fair Work Commission next month.

Source: ACTU

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In a recently released Change.org petition Australians are giving voice to their frustration with the national carrier which recently announced it was reneging on its promise made in May this year to not offshore more call centre jobs.

The petition calls on Joyce and the Board to immediately reverse this decision and abide by their promise to maintain jobs in Australia and the excellent service our onshore staff delivers.

In May, Qantas announced a massive restructure of the Company that would see dramatic cuts across the airline. However, Chief Executive Officer Alan Joyce did promise that no additional call centre jobs would be offshored, that instead the Tasmanian contact centre would take the jobs that would be moved after the closure of the Brisbane and Melbourne centres.

However, in their recent shocking announcement, Qantas management is breaking this promise and offshoring more call centre jobs to New Zealand!

Not only did Qantas promise these jobs to its Tasmanian contact centre, the Tasmanian Government stumped up a $10.9m subsidy to Qantas to stay in Hobart and put the jobs there. Qantas would also need to spend additional money in Auckland to buy extra space for the new staff, when the Hobart centre already has that space.

Qantas must not renege on its promise to maintain its Australian workforce and maintain the excellent service provided by Qantas workers. Massive cuts in the Company are already having an effect on the level of service customers expect and this decision to offshore more jobs will only increase the level of frustration felt by Qantas customers.

Qantas, you made a promise, Tassie is giving you cash, Hobart has the space and plenty of prospective workers are already lined up: it’s time you acted like our national carrier and stop offshoring Australian front line customer service jobs!

Alan Joyce and the Qantas Board must listen to the Australian people, especially with the AGM coming up in late October, so please sign the petition and share it with your networks.

By signing and giving voice to the outrage of Qantas passengers, staff and Australians in general who are appalled by the mismanagement of our national carrier, you will make it clear to Joyce and the Board that if they have any hope of regaining the confidence of the Australian community, they need to do a whole lot better than sending Australian jobs overseas, especially those jobs Qantas promised would remain in Australia just a few months ago.

This new plan to offshore the call centre jobs is an ill-conceived, half-baked plan that is still being formulated. At a time when other companies are bringing call centre work back to Australia – Qantas is doing the opposite, this does not bode well for Qantas passengers.

You can find more details about this latest example of Qantas mismanagement by clicking here: Are Qantas making up the Telephone Sales strategy as they go along?

Source: ASU

Click here to sign the petition!
Abbott’s budget cuts cost jobs and hurt economy

The Abbott Government’s Budget cuts to science, innovation, skills and training will do long-term damage to Australia’s economic wellbeing, ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver has told a Senate Inquiry into Budget Cuts.

“The long-term future of the Australian economy depends on our willingness to foster and exploit process and product innovation,” said Mr Oliver.

“This Budget will do significant damage to our capacity to train, develop and retain the best scientists and researchers in industrial innovation, with damaging consequences for our ability to build a more innovative and competitive economy.”

Mr Oliver said the Government has slashed $1 billion dollars in skills and training from the Budget and then announced a bandaid solution earlier this week with its announcement of an Industry Innovation and Competitiveness Agenda.

“This is like cutting your arm off and putting a bandaid on it,” said Mr Oliver.

“It’s an attempt to distract attention from the impact of deep cuts to our national innovation system by re-packaging the remaining money as something new.”

“The reality is that while cutting hundreds of millions from science, research and education, the government is proposing to spend just $37 million over four years on supporting advanced manufacturing.”

Mr Oliver said the Government’s short-sightedness has put Australia at risk of falling behind the rest of the world.

“The British Government has recently dedicated £500 million of taxpayers’ money to supporting new research in automotive technologies, yet this Government simply stood by while our car manufacturing industry announced it was packing up and leaving Australia for good.”

“The impact on skills, training and innovation - and many thousands of working families – will be devastating.”

Mr Oliver told the Senate Inquiry that developing and sustaining a culture of innovation cannot be done overnight and on the cheap.

“It requires long-term vision, commitment and funding stability, but at a stroke this Government’s Budget has signaled to business, investors and workers that their commitment to building a more innovative economy counts for little.”

Source: ACTU

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Gearing Up to Celebrate 100 Years!

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 – get in touch with Irene Monro via email at: irene.monro@together.org.au

Australian Services Union

2014 Delegate Training Calendar

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<tr>
<th>Date – Course</th>
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<tr>
<td>November 12 (WED) Member Education Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 10 (WED) Delegates 101</td>
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To register for a course, please email your membership number, name, workplace and the date of the course you wish to attend to: edu@together.org.au

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Unions to claw back super increases for workers

Unions will push workplace claims to claw back the superannuation increases Tony Abbott and Clive Palmer traded away leaving huge holes in the retirement savings of millions of Australians.

“Australian workers cannot afford any delay in increasing the superannuation guarantee from 9% to 12% so we’ll fight to lock these increases in at the workplace level now,” ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver said.

“More than 4 million Australian workers are covered by enterprise bargaining agreements and unions will be fighting to get clauses into all new agreements that will see workers get the increases to their superannuation that they were counting on.”

“We’ll also be seeking commitments from employers whose workers have already entered into enterprise agreements in good faith by taking into account the super guarantee increase when negotiating the wage package.” Mr Oliver said that when negotiating workplace agreements, superannuation is a given and workers and their representatives always bargain over and above that.

“We never concede there should be a trade-off for superannuation,” Mr Oliver said.

“We won’t forgo pay rises and we won’t forgo promised increases to superannuation – we’ll be fighting so workers have a living wage and security in retirement.”

Mr Oliver says the Abbott- Palmer dirty deal will see a 25 year old on average earnings, over their working life, have $100,000 less when they retire.

“Increasing the super guarantee is particularly important for low to middle income earners, especially women whose careers were interrupted while they were raising children.”

“It would have delivered greater financial security for workers, addressed the problems of an ageing population, and supported the economy with investment in national infrastructure and jobs – but Tony Abbott and Clive Palmer’s dirty deal scraps all of that.”

“Unions will not stand by and let the retirement savings of hardworking Australians be unfairly targeted by this Government.”

“Whether that’s by delaying the super guarantee increase or scrapping the low income super contribution which helps boost the retirement savings of almost 3.6 million workers who earn $37,000 per year or less – including 2.2 million women.”

Mr Oliver said the ACTU would be updating its new enterprise bargaining toolkit to empower workers to fight back against the Government’s cruel attack on hardworking Australians.

“Employers would have already budgeted and planned for this increase in the superannuation guarantee so there is no reason for them not to do the right thing by their workers and pass it on instead of pocketing it.”

“Unfortunately, we don’t expect employers to line up to give workers what they deserve so Australian Unions will fight for it.”

Source: ACTU