

the meatworker

EDITOR: M Journeaux



**2025
LABOUR DAY
EDITION**



AMIEU
QLD WA NT BRANCH



Matt **JOURNEAUX** Branch Secretary

**Celebrating
the wins
of the past
and looking
to the
future.**

This year has kicked off much like last year ended, it has been full on, the first few months of the year is streaking by and Christmas will be here again before we can blink.

Labour day is around the corner, and I encourage all members to attend their respective Labour Day celebrations in their area.

In the early 1850's, workers faced oppressive working conditions with long hours and often worked 6 or 7 days a week, no sick leave, no holidays and basically no workplace rights. In the 1850's the momentum gathered for the 8-hour workday. This was on the premise that 8 hours of work, 8 hours of sleep and 8 hours of leisure was a fair outcome.

On the 21st April 1856, the stonemasons marched on Parliament





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The AMIEU owes its humble beginnings to the Australasian Butchers Union

House in Melbourne to demand an 8-hour work day to be enshrined in legislation. That resulted in a 48-hour week being negotiated. For the first time in history a maximum number of hours was a legal obligation, and a 48 hour work week was a start.

The 8-hour day was gradually adopted across different States over the 1850's.
Victoria (mid 1856)
NSW (late 1856)
Queensland (1858)
South Australia (1873)
and Tasmania (1874)

In Queensland, the Eight Hour Day, or as we know it today, as Labour Day has been celebrated since 1865.

The day was moved to May in memory of the Haymarket Affair. On the 4th May 1886 striking workers and supporters were bombed at the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company in Chicago in the US. Two workers lost their lives with many more were injured. The strikers were rallying for the implementation of an 8-hour day.

To ensure that the Labour Day was celebrated in conjunction with a

public holiday the day was moved to the first Monday in May. This change was made in 1901. After these early struggles it was not until 1948 that eventually a 40-hour week was implemented as a national right for all workers in Australia.

Workers across the globe have fought for better wages and conditions and employers have always fought against giving them.

In 1906 the Australasian Butchers Union was registered and changed its name to the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU) in 1912. The AMIEU has operated as a single coverage union over that entire time.

As you can see, workers struggles are a worldwide issue not one that is isolated to

our own back yards. Workers across the globe have fought for better wages and conditions and employers have always fought against giving them.

Today Labour Day is not only to celebrate the 8-hour day but is a day to celebrate all the achievements of working people. The list of achievements is too long to write

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ASSISTANT SECRETARY:

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them all here, but they range from OHS laws through to annual leave and sick pay. In fact, every single right you have at work today has been fought for by the union movement not one of them was given voluntarily by employers.

Your forefathers and yourselves control what laws we have and will have in the future. This is why it is so important to celebrate the day and enjoy your achievements with family and friends to celebrate and never to let workers struggles go unnoticed.

While we have achieved some amazing things, working conditions remain a battle ground that employers continue to attack.

Increased productivity, rationalization, prioritize, collaboration, optimization, efficiency, and flexibility are all words that are code for, let's screw the workers.

How many of these expressions have we all heard when we sit down at the EBA negotiating table? I can normally write the script before the first meeting, it's that easy to predict.

I am sure some employers go to the same conferences and are schooled on the least offensive terms that they are going to use to take conditions and wages off their workforce.

So, while the 8-hour day was an important moment in history the continued struggle to get better and fairer workplace laws is a never-ending battle.

Over the last two and half years the union has been able to achieve some significant industrial changes for its members

These include:

- Same Job Same Pay (this has seen some members receiving a \$500+ per week increase)
- Delegates Rights (5 days paid training first year and 1 days paid training for every year thereafter)
- 10 days paid domestic and family violence leave
- Criminalizing wage theft

- Fixing the PALM deed so PALM workers now receive the same rates of pay as local workers.
- A review of the current migration settings with an emphasis on employing local workers and giving existing workers an opportunity to up-skill and if migration is to fill any shortfall, then it should be permanent migration.

Unfortunately, all of this is at risk with the election of a Dutton Government. We will be heading to the polls shortly after this edition of the MEATWORKER hits your inbox. This Federal election will be one of the most important we have seen in the last two decades. What has been won over the last two and half years can be as easily stripped away with the swipe of a pen.

I hate politics as much as the next person, but unfortunately it has such a bearing on everyone's life, that we all must engage and vote in our best interests.

Peter Dutton has already come out and said that he will repeal a large chunk of the laws we have managed to change.

These laws take time to be enacted (same job same pay takes commission hearings to get orders) and sometimes this frustrates members. So unfortunately, if Dutton gets his way, these laws can be removed without some effected members even seeing these benefits.

Make no mistake these laws are good for workers and are hated by employers.

Now I do not care who you vote for but when you go to the polls in May put NUCLEAR DUTTON LAST. He will tear up these changes and condemn workers to the begging bowl of the past. Now is not the time to risk him with your workplace rights.

Hope to see you all at Labour Day

In Solidarity,

Matt





Jimmy **COTTRELL-DORMER** Assistant Secretary

Emerging Trends in Enterprise Bargaining

I have had the privilege of attending enterprise bargaining negotiations with many of our site EBA committees in QLD and WA over the past year. It takes great commitment and dedication from your elected delegates and EBA committee members to achieve a successful EBA outcome. Especially in today's climate where employers are hyper focused on getting offsets for every cent they pass on in wages.

A question we are forced to ask often during EBA bargaining meetings in recent times, Why should workers have to give up conditions to achieve a fair wage increase?

The answer is, of course:
“THEY SHOULDN'T!”

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In most cases, workplace conditions won previously have been at the expense of wages, with an acceptance that sometimes to achieve better working conditions, wage expectations need to be revised down.

So why are many employers seeking to take conditions you've already paid for?

The answer lies in the ever-increasing expectation of business that regardless of the economic climate, profits must be maintained at ever-increasing margins and the normalisation of those excessive profits has perpetuated the problem.

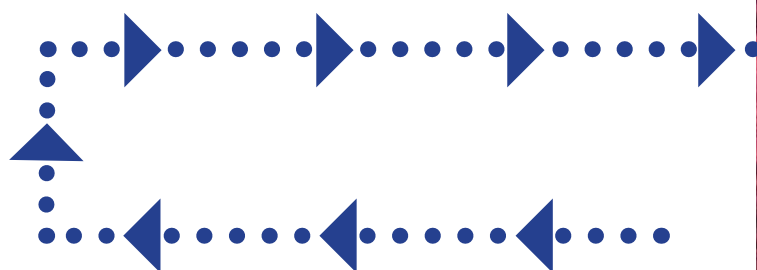
Capitalism, an economic system where private individuals control the means of production and the goal is to make profit, is based on the idea that self-interest and competition will lead to the best outcomes for society.

Increased productivity, the magic silver bullet that solves all problems of capitalists, allows them to achieve their profits and pass on a small portion of those profits to workers, hoping to keep workers happy enough to kick the can down the road for another year.

But what happens when workers have no more productivity gains to give? The right answer is that business should accept that growth and excessive profits are not always achievable... yeah right! The tough answer is that businesses need to invest in technology and innovation and find other ways of becoming more productive, but this comes at cost and risk. The cheaper, and favoured approach is to reduce the cost of labour. However, in a cost-of-living crisis, employers know that they won't keep a workforce unless they pass on some wage relief. The alternative: take workers conditions to reduce output costs and hope that workers' need for wage increases will make them willing to accept losses to their conditions. Employers are all using this tactic presently at the bargaining table - it's almost as if they all attended the same conference on how to screw over workers in a cost-of-living crisis!

Some of the workplace reforms we've seen (and fought for) under the current Federal Labor Government have helped us to keep the bosses at bay, but business is busy lobbying to get Peter Dutton and the LNP elected and wind back working entitlements from our laws as soon as they get the LNP in power. Don't let Dutton destroy more of your working conditions, put the LNP last on the ballot paper!

Collective Bargaining should be directed at ensuring that the benefits of economic growth are shared fairly with the workers who drive that growth, not at the expense of hard-won entitlements.



If you have benefited from one of the many successful EBA's achieved by the AMIEU recently, please, give your AMIEU committee the credit they deserve and know that every one of those deals was won against an onslaught of claims from your employer to pass on the lowest wage increase they could possibly get away with, while offsetting those wage offers by reducing conditions.

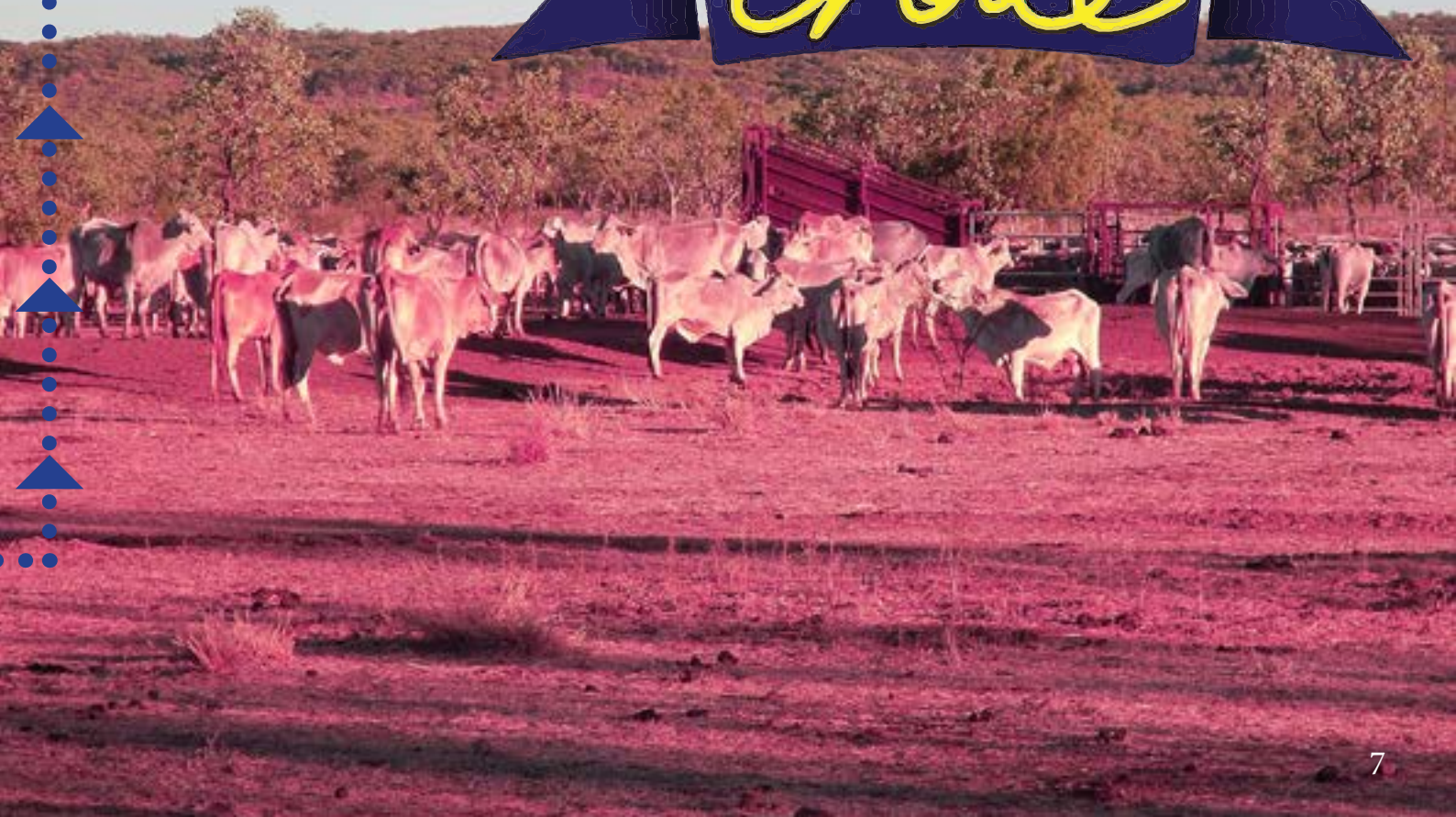
It is a testament to the resolve of members and their EBA Committee representatives that we've been able to achieve some very successful EBA outcomes, holding off the employer grab for conditions and achieving reasonable, above inflation, wage increases.

At time of writing, I'm about to enter the next round of EBA negotiations at Australian Country Choice. We expect a tough negotiation at ACC. I'm sure the Company will be singing from the same hymn book as other businesses and seeking productivity gains from the workers as has been their goal in past negotiations.

As ever, the best deal will be won based on the resolve of Union members. If you are not yet a member of the AMIEU at ACC, please join today and help us amplify your voice at the bargaining table!

In solidarity,
Jimmy

I'm sure the Company will be singing from the same hymn book as other businesses and seeking productivity gains from the workers as has been their goal in past negotiations.





What a start to 2025

Dawn **Crisafulli** Organiser Report

Comrades,

Well, it's been a big year so far already. Cyclone Alfred got us all very nervous and for good reason. Apparently, that was the first cyclone to cross the Brisbane coastline for 30 years. Power outages, floods, debris and very limited supplies seem to be the go. It certainly was a very harrowing time and I hope that everyone fared well through it and didn't lose anything.

We had two great days of training with all of our Delegates back in January which was really well received. We decided to combine the Delegates from Inghams and Golden Cockerel in the one session which worked out very well. Hopefully everyone took something away to help them to help others.

Remember that your Delegates are on site to help you, if you have any dramas in the workplace please make sure to let your Delegate know. They can give you advice, talk to your supervisor or even just listen to what's happening with you.

Membership is important at all our sites so if you are not a member yet, you should seriously be thinking about joining up. The one thing we have all realised over the last couple of years is that management isn't getting any nicer and working in the sheds has become a lot different. Where we used to feel that we could sensibly negotiate some sort of decent outcome with employers on most issues, we now feel like it's an uphill battle. The better the membership; the better the outcomes for workers.

The best way you can help is to join the Union. As we learnt through the EBA process at Lytton/Murarrie, there is strength in numbers, and we have the 5.5%, 4%, 4% pay rises that attest to that!



Lytton distribution is getting an upgrade in the weigh label area. Five of the seven weigh label machines will be getting new technology with the hope of making the job easier for the workers.



Inghams has finally got a new HR, Joanne Staples, after the previous HR left last year. We have lost both shift managers at this site over about a four month period. The day shift manager, left after four months and the night shift manager who applied for his day shift position decided to leave almost as soon as he got the job. Christina Molli is now looking after night shift for 6 months until they can replace both of them.

Golden Cockerel seems to be finally learning how to communicate with their employees. During the cyclone period Cockerel kept their workers up to date via text messages and email letting them know exactly when they were expected to be at work and when the shed would be shut down. Unlike other sheds that have not worked out how to consult or communicate...they then wonder why the workers don't respond as positively or be as helpful as management would hope.

Cockerel has received another group of PALM workers on site and all of them seem to be quite happy at this shed. It is good to see all of you on site, remember to join the Union!

Another Plant manager has moved on with Keith Head leaving Cockerel in January. We are still waiting to see that position filled.

Golden Cockerel are going ahead with their plans for the new distribution centre at the site. Morningside has been the home for their distribution for a few years now and hopefully work on that will commence soon.

Thank You!

Finally, I have some exciting news. After 15 years with the AMIEU I have made the decision to move on. Because I came off the floor at Inghams Cleveland and then became your Organiser I have been with some of you now for over 20 years. It will be the end of an era.

Thank you to all of you that have touched my life, being the organizer for your shed has been one of the most wonderful experiences in my life. Being in your lunchrooms and sharing your lives has really helped me to become the person I am today. Through many EBA's, natural disasters, good times, crappy times and sometimes even crappier times, getting the best outcome for the members has always been the priority.

I thank you for all of your support and friendship, the fun times and the laughs (there sure has been a lot of those) thanks for the memories that I will cherish forever more. I will miss...most of you.

If you see me in the street do come and say HI.

LABOUR DAY

2025

Labour Day Parade and festivities Information

Brisbane

When: Monday 5th May 2024 9.30am

Where: Assemble for the march at Turbot Street, Brisbane. We then march to the RNA showgrounds where the festivities and BBQ begin. A march route will be available on our website.

Toowoomba

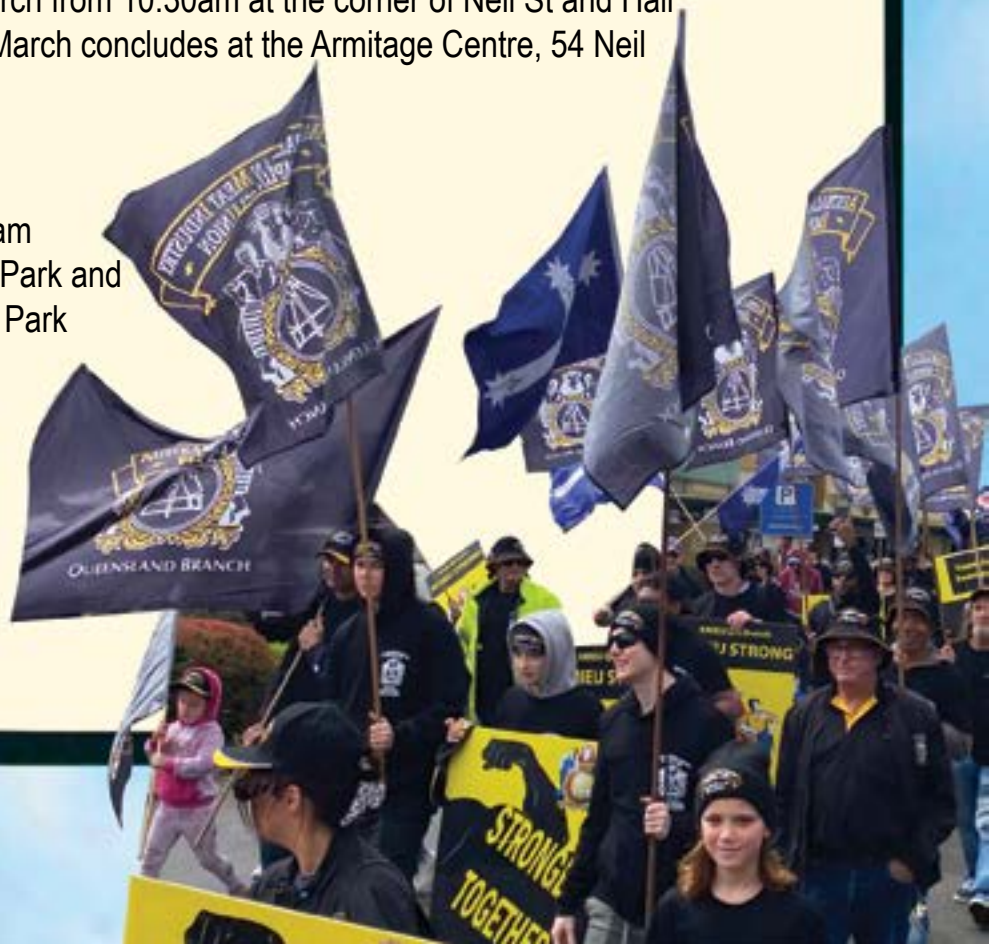
When: Saturday 3rd May 10:30am

Where: Assemble for the march from 10:30am at the corner of Neil St and Hall Lane, Toowoomba. March concludes at the Armitage Centre, 54 Neil Street.

Rockhampton

When: Monday 5th May 10am

Where: Assemble at Woods Park and concludes at Woods Park where the fun and festivities begin.



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**What a big year it
has been already**

Bill Karati Organiser Report

WU

AUSTRALIA'S

WORST

UNION

I would like to start with the Australian Workers Union (AWU): What they are up to? I want to talk about the harm being caused when they decide it is okay to cross the path of another union - this time being AMIEU. The AWU are well-known for this kind of behaviour in the union movement.

AMIEU Queensland and Northern Territory Branch expanded to include Western Australia and its members when the South and Western Australian Branch was closed down. I know the true value of a strong union that is well organised, well managed and supportive of its members. The AMIEU Queensland Branch (now the AMIEU Queensland, Northern Territory and Western Australia Branch) have invested heavily in WA, which is great for all meat workers in this State. I was given time to rebuild the union membership in WA which required earning trust and getting support from workers to believe in AMIEU, which makes the current actions of the AWU extremely frustrating.

The AWU know nothing about the meat industry and unfortunately are just trying to increase their union membership anyway they can.

Their officials are lying to our potential members in claiming that they have the right all of a sudden to walk into our work sites and poach workers. When I questioned one of their organisers as to whether he knew anything about the meat industry or worked in a meat establishment, his answer was a laughably pathetic, "That's private."

I have said this before to our members: stand up and tell these organisers to get off your plant, don't come back and be proud to say this a AMIEU work site!

I have spoken to the Unions WA Secretary Riki Hendon about our issue with the AWU and will keep pushing to have them off our work sites.

I attended a meeting at Unions WA on Tuesday 11th March and was informed the AWU had re-affiliated with Unions WA: Time to go to work!!!

Tammin Minerva

Unfortunately this site closed down on 6th January 2025.

Workers returned to start work after their Christmas break, only to find out the owner of Minerva foods Australia had closed the plant.

This was a shock to workers and to management, as they had been given no notice that the plant was closing. There was also a lot of talk last year about the company (MFA) investing in an expansion of their slaughter floor to process more animals at Tammin Minerva.

Some workers received a redundancy payment; however the agency (LSA) for the PALM workers decided they were going to fly them to Sydney the following Saturday. I called a meeting on Wednesday for the PALM workers and found out they wanted to stay in Western Australia. I made calls to HRs at VV Walsh, Harvey Beef and Linley Valley Pork who were all keen to take them on. Their main request was they wanted a clean slate from LSA if they were going to hire any of the PALM workers. I then informed LSA and heard nothing back until Friday and was told they were unable to help the workers stay in Western Australia due to time and rules they were committed to. Unfortunately, the next day the PALM workers were on a plane to Sydney.

I would like to thank Colin, the manager from Tammin Minerva and the HRs from V&V Walsh, Harvey Beef and Linley Valley Pork who all reached out to help the these workers from Tammin Minerva try to stay and work in Western Australia.

PALM 
Pacific Australia Labour Mobility

Talloman

EBA Negotiations started 20th Of November 2024, with Jimmy (the Assistant Branch Secretary) leading, we have a very good negotiating team.

We did the Talloman Production agreement last year and the members were happy with the result we achieved. The company now want to join both Production and Maintenance agreements into one. We are seeking a 3-year deal with a 5% increase for each year. The company have come back with 3.5 % for the first year and then 3% the next two years. We rejected their first offer and there has been no movement from either side thereafter. So far both parties have agreed on a number of claims, with strong negotiating from the AMIEU and delegates as we are still working through issues to reach an agreement.



D'Orsogna

EBA Negotiations started here on 18th February 2025. Our main claim was 7% for each year over 3 years. It is very important we get a decent pay rise as rates at D'Orsogna are low. Last year some of their rates fell below the Award Rate and had to be topped up to match the 3.75% pay rise from the Fair Work Commission. Another claim from the boning room is to negotiate a new tally for the boners.

Forklift drivers seeking a higher rate they are also well below the average rate a forklift driver can make in WA. We now waiting for a response from management.

Linley Valley Pork will be ready to start EBA negotiations in the next couple of weeks and are just waiting to set a date.

Other EBA negotiations to follow will be Western Meat Packers around May /June, and Harvey Beef around July with their 7-year expired EBA!

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V&V Walsh

I received a call from a slaughterman complaining about their tally on the sheep floor, I told him the union could help them, but they needed to get their union membership up. Shortly after from late October 2024 we started having meetings at his home, discussing manning levels, rates and the tally system they were using. The meetings went well with a lot of experienced workers sharing ideas to improve the overall work being performed on the slaughter floor.

The workers wanted to negotiate wages, a fairer tally system as well as a rate for break downs. We also signed a lot of new union members at our meetings. We put together a proposal and presented it to the company in January 2025. We have had regular meetings with HR and the company informed us our proposal was being considered, and upper management and HR are working through our Claims.

This is good news and AMIEU will be ready to negotiate when they respond.

Workers around V&V Walsh are also watching to see what the slaughter floor achieve, and I am able to give updates in the smoko room. Cheers to everyone one else who are watching and listening, including management.



V&V WALSH
MEAT PROCESSORS & EXPORTERS

M.A.P WA

On one of my first site visits for 2025 I was approached by the manager and a supervisor. The manager then said he was unhappy with my article in The Meatworker Magazine. He tried to inform me the rates I quoted were incorrect and he paid "some" workers more. I said "Your rates are based around the Meat Award, and exactly, you pay SOME workers more!" He then said their legal team is looking into to it and I told him that is okay as our legal team go over our articles before they go to print to ensure our information is correct.

I speak to workers all the time and they are happy to tell me what their rates are and how much they earn per week. I am happy to show workers different EBAs and anyone can view an EBA on the Fair Work Commission website. If it assists by getting workers organised and by joining the AMIEU then I have no problem helping workers to improve their conditions and wages and enjoy a better life for themselves and their families.



Dardanup Butchering Company - DBC Picton

Management have agreed to a 5% increase for Boners and a 2.5 % increase for slicers and some of the labourers in the boning room. (Boners have to perform specific tasks to receive the increase)



UNIONSWA

I have been able visit more now and am getting to know different people. I've also started an organisers course, and it is going well. I have also had meetings with the Health and Safety group and am looking at organising courses for our members.

We are also organising to go on the May Day march through Fremantle and I am looking forward to seeing many of you there.

Bill Karati



Multiple sites negotiating new agreements this year.

Scott Stevens Organiser Report

Welcome members,

I hope everyone had a great Christmas holiday spending time with friends and family.

Well it has definitely been a busy time since the Christmas break with multiple sites negotiating new agreements in the first few months of this year.

On 23rd and 24th January we conducted delegates' rights training at Toowoomba Trades Hall building with shed officials and delegates from JBS Beef City (Toowoomba) and Oakey Beef Exports. Also in attendance was Chris Moore conducting the training course. The feedback from officials and delegates was extremely positive.



Greenmountain - Coominya

Work has been progressing at this site with some Saturdays thrown in just before the Christmas shutdown. There is a large international workforce at this site with the PALM scheme workers and other visa holders making up the bulk of the workforce.

Membership numbers at this site are increasing; especially among the PALM workers.

The current agreement expires in March 2027.



JOHN DEE

John Dee at Warwick

The company informed its workers that they would be conducting another vote in January on an enterprise agreement, but with no additional changes to the previous offer that workers voted down twice at the end of last year.

The vote was held in January with 57.4% of the workers ultimately voting in favour of the company's offer. The pay rises in the agreement include 4% in the first year and 3.8% for each of the second and third years.

The site now has a new delegate in the boning room.

This site also has a large number of foreign workers with the majority working on the night shift.



Oakey Beef Exports

The company has indicated that they wish to start negotiations shortly, with the current agreement due to expire in February 2026.

Membership numbers at this site have been increasing with the onsite officials attending inductions for new workers coming into the industry.

This site has been getting a constant stream of new international workers with more arriving each week.

The consultative committee has been having monthly meetings with the company to continue to improve the conditions for the workers.



Swickers Kingaroy

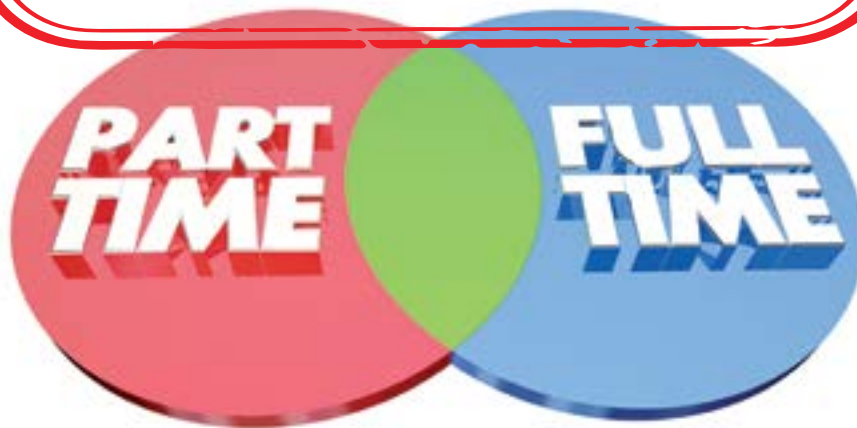
Talks have started on site for the new enterprise agreement to replace the current EBA which expires in July of this year.

The company has once again offered a split wage increase with levels 1,2 and 3 being offered more than levels 4,5 and 6. The committee has proposed a single, uniform wage increase across all workers on the site. The onsite committee has been working hard to increase membership numbers in all departments.

This site has had another group of returning PALM workers come back with more due to arrive in the coming months.



PERMANENT



Negotiations have started at JBS Beef City for the new enterprise agreement to replace the current expired agreement. The company has commenced by offering its now standard offer of 3.5% first year, with 3.0% per year for the rest of a four-year deal.

The company is proposing a new employment category called permanent full time and permanent part time hire -whereby any new employee's

employed after the date of signing of any new agreement they will only be paid at the current rate of pay which would then leave them permanently 3.5% worse off than the present workforce no matter what future wage increase is paid to workers they will always be behind in wages and all current workers will remain as daily hire.

At the time of going to print the negotiations are still on going with the committee and the union aware that the longer talks take the longer workers are without a wage rise.

Finally, I would like to thank all the shed officials and delegates for all their hard work.

Yours in solidarity,

Scott Stevens

**Rockhampton and Townsville**

SAME OLD STORY

Wilian Sardinha Organiser Report

There are no surprises when it comes to JBS's tactics and behavior towards workers and their conditions. Despite claiming to be a "family values" company that treats employees as their greatest asset, their actions tell a different story.

After Enterprise Agreement (EA) negotiations were finalized, voted on by workers, and approved by the Fair Work Commission, JBS reacted like a spoiled child that didn't get its way—throwing a massive tantrum. Typical.

Let's break down the EA outcome and vote results.

Rockhampton: A Strong Win for Workers

Rockhampton employees were highly satisfied with the outcome of their EA negotiations, thanks to the support of the AMIEU. Workers voted with an overwhelming 91% approval for a three-year deal that includes:

- Wage increases of 4%, 3.5%, and 3.5% over the three-year period.
- Wage payments from the approval vote, ensuring no unnecessary delays.

- Penalty rates of 60% for Level 4 employees and 50% for Levels 1, 2, and 3 for extra workdays.
- Saturday penalty rates increased to 30%.
- Significant improvements in allowances.

A well-earned victory for Rockhampton workers.

Townsville: A Completely Different Story

The situation at JBS Townsville was vastly different. The AMIEU refused to support or endorse the company's poor EA offer, which included:

“ JBS reacted like a spoiled child that didn't get its way—throwing a massive tantrum. Typical. ”

- Lower wage increases of 3.5%, 3%, and 3% over three years.
- Delayed wage payments, only starting after Fair Work approval—causing further financial strain on workers due to salary depreciation.

JBS went even further in their efforts to weaken workers' bargaining power. They threatened employees by stating they would withhold annual leave and other pay entitlements if workers participated in industrial action—an obvious attempt to break the unit's strong collective strength.

JBS also attempted to force employees to approve their offer, but after intervention from the AMIEU and the workers' committee, the company was pressured into agreeing to pay wages immediately after the vote.

The AMIEU and workers' committee urged employees to vote with their conscience, standing firm in the belief that JBS's offer was far from good enough given the economic conditions and the current cost-of-living crisis.

JBS's Threats & Intimidation

To further intimidate workers, JBS Townsville sent out the following message:

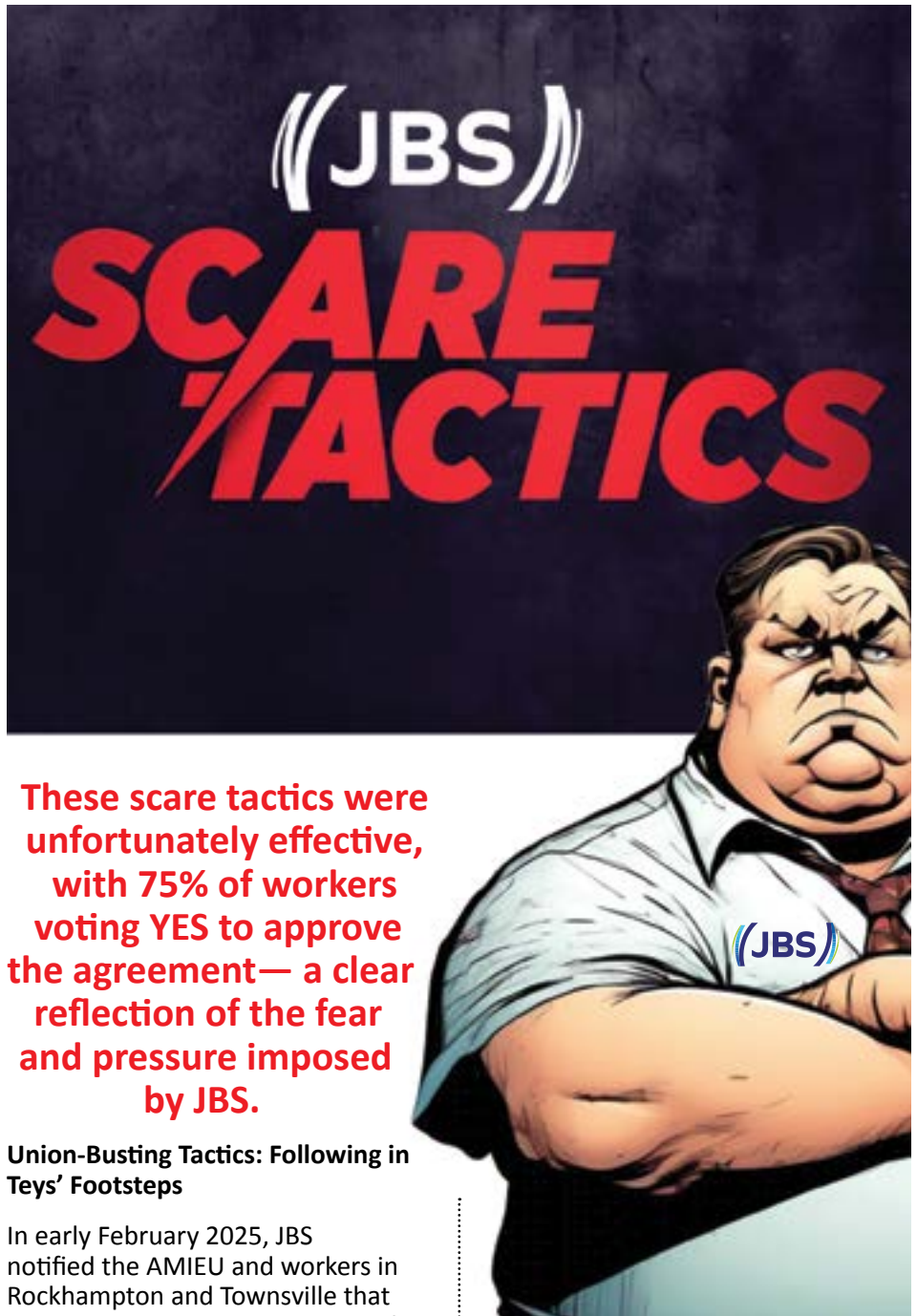
What happens if I vote 'NO'?

Nothing. You will not receive any pay increase, and we re-start the negotiation process

JBS does not back-pay and so you will likely go backwards

What happens if I vote 'YES' for industrial action?

- If you take industrial action by stopping work, you will not be paid, and JBS will not allow you to use leave.
- JBS is legally obligated not to pay you.
- JBS could lock you out for weeks—weeks without pay.
- The earliest you could take industrial action is in about two weeks.



These scare tactics were unfortunately effective, with 75% of workers voting YES to approve the agreement—a clear reflection of the fear and pressure imposed by JBS.

Union-Busting Tactics: Following in Teys' Footsteps

In early February 2025, JBS notified the AMIEU and workers in Rockhampton and Townsville that they would stop deducting union fees via payroll deductions. This childish and deliberate move was designed to weaken the union's strength, mirroring Teys Brothers' well-known anti-union strategies.

It's a clear attempt to undermine worker representation, crush collective bargaining, and push through unfavorable conditions. Unfortunately, as always, JBS has a handful of loyal followers among workers who willingly side with the company, believing they are helping themselves. In reality, they are only helping the company grow richer while their fellow workers grow poorer and lose essential protections.

The sad truth is that these individuals not only buy into JBS's agenda but also encourage others to follow suit—leading them straight into the same difficult conditions that workers at Teys have faced.

The Fight Continues

Despite JBS's underhanded tactics, Rockhampton workers secured a strong deal, and Townsville workers refused to back down in the face of intimidation. The AMIEU remains committed to fighting for fair wages, conditions, and respect for all JBS employees—because without the workers, there is no JBS.

TBS Mackay: EBA Negotiations Set to Begin

The Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) negotiations at TBS Mackay are ready to take off. The elections for the consultative committee have been completed, and an EBA meeting should be scheduled soon, following an agreement between management and the AMIEU to commence negotiations.

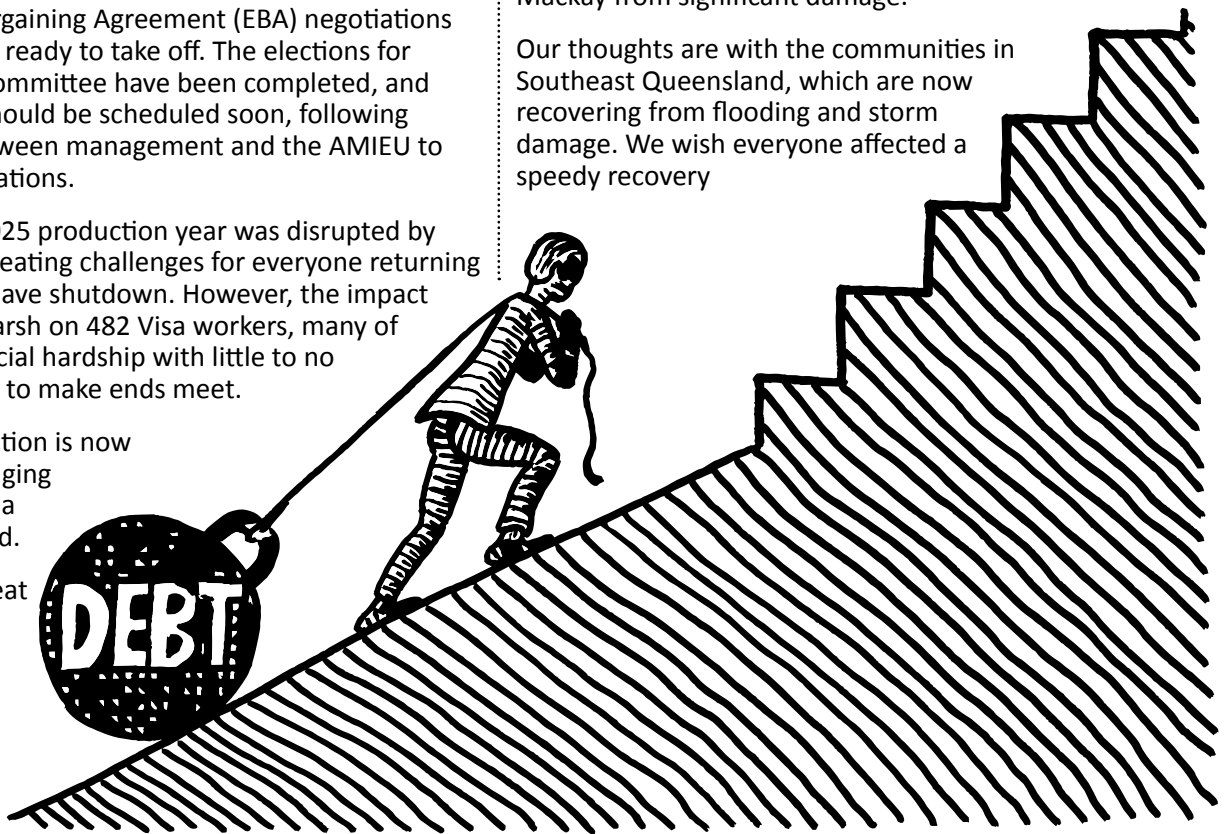
The start of the 2025 production year was disrupted by severe weather, creating challenges for everyone returning from the annual leave shutdown. However, the impact was particularly harsh on 482 Visa workers, many of whom faced financial hardship with little to no savings or support to make ends meet.

Thankfully, production is now back on track, bringing renewed hope for a positive year ahead.

The imminent threat of Cyclone Albert was a close call for TBS Mackay employees, but fortunately, the cyclone veered

past and instead struck Southeast Queensland, sparing Mackay from significant damage.

Our thoughts are with the communities in Southeast Queensland, which are now recovering from flooding and storm damage. We wish everyone affected a speedy recovery



Teys Rockhampton & Teys Biloela: Same Issues, Different Day

The challenges at Teys Rockhampton and Teys Biloela remain the same—rising production demands, increasing chain speeds, excessive overtime, and a persistent shortage of workers. Despite ongoing concerns, these issues continue to define daily operations at both sites.

I've had the opportunity to visit Teys Biloela a few times this year, but I have yet to make it to Teys Rockhampton. However, I was able to meet with Rockhampton members off-site, as many still feel intimidated by Teys' tactics during union site visits. This ongoing fear and reluctance to engage on-site highlight the need for continued advocacy and support for workers' rights.

One notable shift in the workforce has been the growing success of Pacific Islander workers at both sites. While their contributions have been invaluable, the struggle to recruit local workers persists. Many locals are choosing employment at neighboring abattoirs instead, leading Teys to take a new approach—directly employing Pacific workers rather than relying on labor hire. This strategy aims to stabilize the workforce and meet increasing production demands.

The situation at both Teys Rockhampton and Biloela sheds light on the broader challenges facing the meat industry—balancing productivity with fair working conditions. As these issues persist, the need for strong

union representation and worker advocacy remains more important than ever

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to all our union site officials and delegates. You are the backbone of our organization, the driving force behind fair conditions, better rights, and a safer, more just workplace for all. Every day, you stand up for your fellow workers, protect the most vulnerable, and push back against unfair treatment. Your dedication and resilience are nothing short of inspiring, and I cannot emphasize enough how vital your work is.

“But the fight for workers' rights is never won alone. We need more voices, more strength, and more people willing to stand up and make a difference.”

But the fight for workers' rights is never won alone. We need more voices, more strength, and more people willing to stand up and make a difference. If you've ever wanted to be part of something bigger, to help shape a better future for yourself and your workmates, now is the time to step up. Becoming a union delegate means being a leader, a problem-solver, and a champion for fairness—and there's no greater reward than knowing you've made a real impact.

As we celebrate Labour Day, let's remember the struggles of those who came before us and the victories we enjoy today because of them. And let's recommit to the fight for a stronger, fairer future for all workers.

To all our delegates, officials, and members—thank you. I wish you wisdom, strength, and success in the year ahead. Enjoy a well-earned Labour Day celebration, and let's keep building a movement that makes a difference

AROUND THE TRAPS

Minister Burke joined us at a recent delegates meeting in Brisbane. He is a member of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), and currently holds several key federal ministerial positions, including Minister for Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, Minister for Cyber Security, and Leader of the House.





In a weather event does the company have to pay workers?

Warren Earle Organiser Report

Dear Members,

On writing this newsletter Cyclone Alfred is about to hit southeast Queensland and Northern NSW. JBS Dinmore, Primo Foods, Hilton Foods and Kilcoy Global Foods have stood down workers and closed the plants.

Obviously by the time this newsletter is received by members the event will be truly well and over. I hope all of you were not impacted by the cyclone and you and your families got through safely and without incident.

A common question that has been asked through this weather event is does the company have to pay workers? Members have been contacting me asking if they had to use annual leave or take unpaid leave.

Generally, employers cannot stand down employees without pay. For examples, for disciplinary reasons. But for reasons such as an extreme weather event it's different.

Plants that operate as a permanent daily hire such as JBS Dinmore have a 10% daily hire allowance factored into employees pay. JBS Dinmore can stand down employees without pay for things such as cattle availability due to weather conditions.

For other plants such as Primo, Hilton and Kilcoy section 524 of the Fair Work act allows employer to stand down the employee during the relevant period if the employee cannot usefully be employed during that period for which the employer cannot reasonably be held responsible. A cyclone and/or extreme is an example of that. If any member has been stood down, then I advise them to contact me so I can discuss their specific situation.

**SORRY WE ARE
CLOSED**

Enterprise Agreement Negotiations

JBS Dinmore

In July workers receive their last pay increase before your EA expires on July 1, 2026. It might seem far away, but negotiations will commence late this year. JBS Dinmore is the largest processing site in the southern hemisphere and your site is the mother ship of JBS operations in Australia. We know they will want to make changes. At other JBS sites negotiations have shown they are ignorant of that facts that workers have had to endure successive years of high inflation. Pay offers have not met that increase and workers have gone backwards. Much will be communicated about this over the coming year.

Hilton Foods

In July this year workers will receive their last pay increase before negotiations are expected to commence late this year. Our membership has been steadily building, and we need that to continue so we are a strong united force. Leading up to these negotiations there will be much communication at the site, and we need to show we are strong and united so we get the best possible outcome.

Primo Foods

After a long-drawn-out negotiation and after the workers voted down an agreement last year, another offer was put to the workers in February. This offer was voted up overwhelmingly by the majority of workers. The company had wanted to make many changes that would have adversely affected the workers but our strong membership and workers rejecting the initial company proposal sent a strong message to the employer. The new proposed 4-day roster was a sticking point but having secured a long week-end in the event Primo introduces such a roster, the workers voted it up. Rest assured; the company



very much wanted a rotating 4-day roster but the committee held firm in negotiations. I would like to thank all of them for their invaluable assistance during this time.

Kilcoy

Unfortunately for Kilcoy workers your agreement does not expire until February 2027. I know there are many workers who have regrets that the last agreement was narrowly voted up. There is much that we can fix if workers stick together. Having received your last pay increase in February the next pay increase will not be due until February 2026.

Labour Day is fast approaching, and I hope all members and their families take advantage of what is a great day. Details will be in this edition of the meat worker and notices will be placed up on union notice boards at your work site.

It is a great day and it's all FREE!! First, we assemble in Turbot Street Brisbane and with other unions and tens of thousands on union members we march to the Brisbane Show grounds where the AMIEU has a Marquee and the steak burgers, sausages, soft drinks and beers will be free to enjoy. There are Ekka rides, live music and it's a terrific fun family day.

The Labour Day March is a public holiday and one in which all workers should celebrate. The day is in recognition of the hard-fought pay

and conditions of employment we all enjoy. It is a time we acknowledge and recognize the fight and sacrifices that generations of workers have made to give us the conditions of employment we all enjoy today.

Many young workers do not know that the things we hold dearly like annual leave, penalty rates, the 38-hour week, paid sick leave, long service leave, shift allowances, paid public holidays, workers compensation pay, parental and maternity leave, superannuation, and much more were hard fought and won by unions. They were not freely given by employers.

Big business pay fees to associations like the Australian Industry Group, the Australian Meat Industry Council, retailers' associations etc are effectively unions for big business. These associations lobby governments on behalf of employers continually to try and force change to workplace laws that would benefit employers and strip away OUR work conditions and reduce workers' wages.

The union movement is the only voice for working Australians. So this is a day we stand proud and loud march and celebrate workers' rights. Hope to see you there.



Legislative changes that impact workplace delegates

Chris Moore Organiser Report

Since joining the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU) in April, my focus has been on expanding union membership and navigating legislative changes that impact workplace delegates. These changes represent a significant step forward in securing the rights of delegates and empowering them in their roles.

Legislative Changes to Delegate Rights

In June last year, amendments were introduced to formalize the rights of workplace delegates, providing them with legal protection and greater certainty in their roles. Previously, these rights were largely based on informal agreements, leaving delegates vulnerable. The new legislation clearly defines their responsibilities and entitlements, eliminating ambiguity and strengthening their ability to advocate effectively for workers.

Some changes like:

to request reasonable access to workplace facilities. This includes but is not limited to:

- (i) a room or area to hold discussions that is fit for purpose, private and accessible by the workplace delegate and eligible employees including for the purposes of general inductions of new employees at the site;

- (ii) a physical or electronic noticeboard in each lunchroom;
- (iii) electronic means of communication ordinarily used in the workplace by the employer to communicate with eligible employees and by eligible employees to communicate with each other, including access to Wi-Fi;
- (iv) a lockable filing cabinet or other secure document storage area; and

office facilities and equipment including printers, scanners and photocopiers

Through dedicated training sessions, we have been equipping delegates with the knowledge and confidence to leverage these legislative advancements. However, our work is far from complete. It is crucial for AMIEU delegates to continue pushing these rights to their full extent to ensure they remain safeguarded, particularly in the event of a political shift at the federal level. We have seen several companies in meat industry, who are in fact big LNP donors, start to test the water around the strength of these changes hoping for a change of government to once again strip these powers away for delegates.

**LEGISLATIVE CHANGE
for delegates rights**

Training and Engagement Across Queensland

Since joining AMIEU, I have had the privilege of working closely with delegates across Northern and Southern Queensland, witnessing firsthand the dedication and resilience of our union representatives. While I had hoped to conduct more training sessions, the sessions we have completed have been highly impactful, reinvigorating our delegates with a renewed sense of purpose and a stronger legal foundation.

Training sessions with Oakey Beef and Beef City delegates, held at Toowoomba's Trades Hall, provided valuable insights into how long-standing union traditions remain relevant while adapting to modern challenges, insights like how important our shed structure is and how important it is to know your EBA procedures. These sessions also explored innovative strategies to maximize the benefits of recent legislative changes, strategies such as mapping the workplace and getting into the habit of written correspondence with the company, gone are the days of a spoken work being the rule of thumb.

Similarly, training with Inghams and Golden Cockerel delegates highlighted the significant progress within the poultry industry over the past two decades. AMIEU members have played a pivotal role in driving these changes, demonstrating the power of collective action. Reflecting on our union's history has been instrumental in motivating current delegates, reinforcing the importance of solidarity and persistence in achieving meaningful workplace improvements.

Looking Ahead

The success of our training sessions has underscored the importance of open and constructive dialogue with delegates. These discussions have not only provided

valuable insights but have also strengthened the foundation of our union for the future. As we move forward, it is imperative that we continue fostering this engagement, ensuring that every delegate is equipped with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to advocate effectively for their fellow workers.

By staying vigilant and proactive, AMIEU delegates can ensure that these hard-fought rights are not only preserved but also expanded, securing lasting benefits for all members of the union.





The government responded to the demands of the **TRADE UNION MOVEMENT**

Craig **BUCKLEY** Industrial Report

The last three years has seen some important changes to Australia's industrial relations laws. Some of these changes have resulted in immediate benefits. For other changes, however, it will take time before we can see the positive effects of these reforms.

Same Job Same Pay

The government responded to the demands of the trade union movement and workers to end the sorting and undermining of conditions that go hand in glove with labour hire. The Labor government's new laws are designed to prevent employers from using labour hire to undercut wage rates in enterprise agreements.

Unions, including the AMIEU, are in the process of applying for orders from the Fair Work Commission requiring labour hire companies to pay their employees the same pay as workers directly employed by a meat industry establishment. The process has been slow, because employers are opposing union applications, looking for loopholes in the legislation to try and keep the labour hire sort continuing for as long as possible changed the laws. In a lot of cases, employers 'know they have no chance of stopping a "same job same pay" order being made, but they are running the legal cases anyway, as a delaying tactic. They are trying to drag the matter out as long as they can get away with, to milk every dollar they can out of paying workers substandard wages. Some employers, of course, have been more sensible in their approach, agreeing to orders being made with a minimum of fuss.

This sort of legal wrangling often occurs when new laws are introduced. When there are complicated legal changes, the full implications of the law are often not fully known until the laws have been interpreted by the courts and legal precedents established.

A good example of this can be found with the introduction of protected action ballots in around 2006. Unions had to apply to the Commission to ask the Commission to order a secret ballot of its members before they could take protected strike action. When these laws were first introduced, employers would fight just about every union application, trying to find ways to stop the strike ballots from occurring. It took some time before Commission and federal courts' decisions interpreted the laws and clarified what all the rules were. Since then, employer challenges began to decrease, and now employers hardly ever bother to oppose union applications for protected action ballots anymore.

The same will eventually happen with "same job same pay" orders – if they survive!



There is no doubt that if a Liberal Coalition government is elected in the 2025 Federal Election it will be doing whatever it can to get rid of “same job same pay” orders.

The outcome of this election is going to have very real implications for your job and your workplace. Whoever you vote for – put the LNP Coalition last!

When a “same job same pay” order is made, there is an immediate benefit to the labour hire worker who receive an increase in their wages. However, all workers will benefit in the longer term when it comes to negotiating future enterprise bargaining agreements. Labour hire has helped employers resist wage increases, because they knew they did not have to keep any bargain they made. An employer could sit back and say, if you go on strike, you might force us to agree to higher wages, but we will just replace people with labour hire on cheaper rates of pay. Employers will not have that advantage in future, but only provided workers are prepared to defend the advances that the movement has won.

Now that we are in the process of establishing “same job same pay” it is important to realise that employers will also be looking for other ways of avoiding their obligations. One tactic which we expect to see a lot of is employers trying to introduce lower rates of pay for “new employees.” It is just another underhanded way of trying to pay people less than someone else doing the same job. It is important that workers resist these attempts and do not fall for employer’s lies that these changes will only affect new employees. Allowing employers to get away with this will hurt all workers; workers will only have the strength to advance our interests if we stick together.

Migration Issues

The “same job same pay” changes received a boost from the Federal government even before the laws were changed. That is because the government was able to change to guidelines for PALM workers requiring labour hire companies to pay PALM workers the same rate of pay as local workers working alongside them. These guidelines were changed even before the “same job same pay” laws came into force.

PALM began with relatively small numbers of migrant workers from the Pacific, but it expanded a lot during the Coronavirus pandemic. Bans on international travel basically meant that working holiday makers on “backpacker” visas pretty much disappeared. However, with the worst of COVID apparently behind us, we have started to see Working Holiday Maker visas return to the industry. Workers on “backpacker visas” do not have the same protections.

This is an important issue for workers in the meat industry. The government introduced important



protections for PALM workers, but the AMIEU is concerned that some employers will be keen to go back to employing “backpacker visa” workers: employers do not have the same obligations to these workers as to PALM workers, and holiday makers who don’t speak English well and who are here for only a short time are much easier to exploit.

The Labor government is currently reviewing changes to the working holiday maker visa, and the AMIEU and other unions have made submissions to the government about those changes. We have argued that the working holiday maker visa has long been misused – the workers who come here on such visas are not here on a holiday, they come here intending to work full time in industry. As such, the visa should have the same restrictions – and protections for works – as apply to other work-related visas.

Again, any beneficial changes to the migration system will depend upon Labor remaining in government. If the Liberal National coalition is elected, they will pander to whatever the meat industry wants.

The AMIEU prefers to put its faith in its members rather than governments – but we cannot deny that stronger workplace laws help the union movement to organize its members effectively, and to more effectively struggle to improve our working lives. Employers certainly understand that, and it is clear they are hoping to see a change in government. Keep that in mind as the federal election approaches.



UPDATE

Federal

MATTERS

Brendan **Swan** National Industrial Officer Report

The previous quarter has seen some exciting legal gains and cases across the entirety of the AMIEU (National).

The biggest matter that I am running for Queensland right now is the Regulated Labour Hire Arrangement Order (same job, same pay) that the AMIEU has applied for at JBS Townsville, Rockhampton, Beef City and Dinmore.

JBS and some of the other labour hire providers are opposing the orders being made on the basis that they say it is not fair and reasonable for the orders to be made. JBS argues that the PALM Deed already requires pay parity and for that reason the order should not be made.

The AMIEU says (among other things) that the order should be made because the PALM

Deed is not enforceable by the individual employee (or the Union). If an order is made and JBS or the relevant employers do not pay parity, then the employee or the Union can apply for civil penalties. A final hearing for that matter will take place in or around April 2025.

In other States, I have two enterprise agreement disputes that have arisen in respect of tallies: one of these relates to how tallies apply to the slaughtering and boning rooms, and the other is about whether tally workers are entitled to a paid break. I expect at least one of these to be proceeding to arbitration in the coming weeks.

Earlier this week I lodged a general protections claim against a butchery in South Australia. Our member was verbally abused by his employer, subsequently went

home unwell (and had already notified his employer of being unwell that morning), and by text message told the other supervisors that if he was spoken to like that again that he would complain to the Union. Shortly thereafter (the same day), our member was made redundant.

Other matters that I have on foot at the moment include a sexual harassment dispute and a potential

representative proceeding for several members at a contract cleaning company. The AMIEU is building an evidential case at the moment and continuing our investigations.

We also have a right of entry dispute whereby effectively on the eve of the trial (1-2 weeks ago) the Defendant decided to admit that they did actually hinder or obstruct the AMIEU from entering the premises. That matter is set down

for a penalty hearing in late April 2025.

Last week I instructed in a long-awaited general protections trial relating to a delegate whose employment offer was withdrawn after the AMIEU started asking questions about the contract he was offered. We await judgment from the Court about that matter.

Several other matters have resolved since my last article, ranging from unfair dismissals, underpayment of wages claims, general protections claims, labour hire order applications, and various other advices that I provide on a day to day basis to the Union and its officials.



PALM

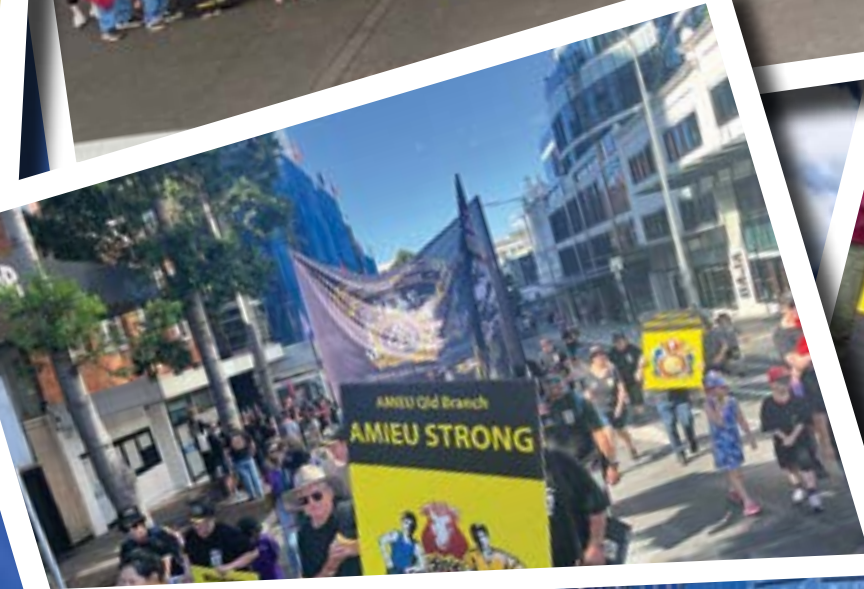
Pacific Australia Labour Mobility

“ JBS and some of the other labour hire providers are opposing the orders being made on the basis that they say it is not fair and reasonable for the orders to be made. JBS argues that the PALM Deed already requires pay parity and for that reason the order should not be made. ”



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AMIEU

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