

Common Cause.

NEW Podcast! FOR MINING AND ENERGY WORKERS



The new CFMEU Mining and Energy podcast brings you up to date with the latest news and views about our industries and the challenges facing our members.

The first episode covers the ways coronavirus has changed how we all work - from staggered shift starts to cleaning down equipment to ditching carpooling - but some proposed solutions like 21/7 rosters have been shown the door.

- National President Tony Maher discusses FIFO's 'Black Swan' event,
- Queensland District President Stephen Smyth calls out 'hot seat changing' & 'hot bedding',
- FIFO Pilbara locomotive driver Paul Bloxson opens up about the pain of leaving his family for 3 months,
- Industry Health & Safety Inspector Stephen Luck talks about the reality of doing night shift and coming home to a house full of self-isolating family,
- National Research Director Peter Colley analyses the falling coal price and stable employment numbers
- Hunter Valley shotfirer Kerry Konieczny explains how she got decent breastfeeding facilities for working mums at her pit.

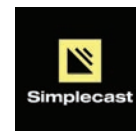
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COVID-19 slowdown: Don't treat labour hire as disposable

Peabody's Coppabella and Middlemount mines in Central Queensland are among the first coal mines starting to cut jobs citing falling demand and prices for coal due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Union is calling on mining companies to do everything possible to retain jobs, including those of labour hire workers and contractors, and not simply cut people loose at the first sign of a slowdown.

While the mining industry is doing better than most - like retail, tourism and education - there is a decline in demand for coal around the world. Lower industrial output and activity is impacting on demand for electricity, and steelmaking and other heavy industry has been curtailed in those countries with severe lockdowns.

Consequently, a slow drift down for spot thermal and coking coal prices over the course of this year has accelerated in recent weeks, with thermal coal dropping to the low US\$49 per tonne rather than being in the US\$66 bracket. Coking coal has dropped from the US\$130/t bracket to under US\$100/t.

If these low prices persist or get worse in the months ahead, coal producers will rethink whether to continue with their current levels of production. However, some companies are acting early to cut jobs - or using the pandemic as an excuse to make pre-planned staffing changes.

Peabody stood down 40 production and maintenance workers at Coppabella mine last Thursday after informing staff that: *"The demand for coal has eased so much in the opening weeks of April that we have seen sales fall out of the Q2 schedule very quickly... we have no way to know when it will recover."*

While the first round of job cuts at Coppabella affects labour hire workers and contractors, another digger fleet will be parked up in June with a reduction of a further 40 permanent employees.

At Middlemount Mine, a joint venture between Peabody and Yancoal, workers were told this week that 25 jobs would be cut.

In other parts of the industry there is evidence of project work slowing down or being cut.

Last week, South32 axed 96 jobs from its Appin mine in NSW after revising the terms of its contract with labour hire company Mastermyne, blaming *"uncertainty due to COVID-19, coupled with lower pricing and demand for metallurgical coal."*

However, South West District Vice President Bob Timbs said the Mastermyne cuts were at least in part due to manoeuvring by South32 to push labour hire workers on to agreements containing lesser employment conditions.

Queensland District President Stephen Smyth said widespread casualisation and contracting out meant that labour hire workers were especially vulnerable in a downturn, and many would have no entitlements to fall back on.

"Labour hire and contract jobs matter too - many of these workers have been long-term, loyal employees," he said.

"Mining companies should do everything they can to keep people in work at this time. Labour hire workers and contractors shouldn't be treated as disposable and cut loose at the first sign of a slowdown."



‘Suck it up or stay home’: unfair choice at FMG

Our Union has mental health concerns for workers at Twigg Forest’s Fortescue Metals Group (FMG) who are being restricted to camp in Port Hedland for weeks, even months on end.

The locomotive drivers have been told by Fortescue management that they are not to leave under any circumstances, even during their two week R and R.

The workers were FIFO from eastern states before national and state coronavirus travel restrictions were implemented. They have now taken the difficult decision to leave their families and relocate to Western Australia until restrictions change.

However in the absence of being provided with adequate community housing, workers are being accommodated in camps, such as Port Hedland’s Club Hamilton, which they can’t leave except to work. With rosters of two weeks on / two weeks off, that’s a lot of time just sitting in camp.

WA District Secretary Greg Busson said there was no reason to keep workers confined to camp and the union had serious concerns about their mental health.

“Keeping men and women confined to a small camp without release for months on end is unnecessary, unfair and a surefire recipe for mental health problems.

“These workers have been in Port Hedland for more than 21 days, some have been there for six weeks. They have uprooted their lives at the company’s request to keep production going.

“We understand that initially, after arrival in WA, there was a reason to keep people separated. But there is no reason now to think their chance of being infected with COVID-19 is higher than anyone else in the community.

“Twigg Forest and Fortescue management should do the right thing and allow workers to leave the camp for essential activities like exercise or to purchase food after they have completed any mandated quarantine period.

“They can be trusted to act responsibly regarding social distancing and they shouldn’t be treated as prisoners.”

One member said that just being able to go for a walk and get a coffee would make a big difference. *“The only option is to suck it up or to go home and wait it out. Not a fair choice at all.”*



Clermont rides for Rocket

Members of our Clermont Lodge in Queensland have celebrated the life of member Rodney 'Rocket' Jarro with a motorbike ride to raise money for Rocket's son Jai.

Rocket was a coal miner at Clermont Coal since 2008 and a Member of the Lodge since its formation in 2014. He died in a tragic accident in February last year.

Clermont Coal CFMEU Lodge Secretary Shane Grattan said Rod was a proud Unionist who advocated for his fellow indigenous mineworkers and a wonderful father to 13-year-old Jai.

The 'Ride for Rocket' was initiated by friends of Rod's and sponsored by the Clermont Lodge and National and Queensland District CFMEU Mining and Energy offices.

The organisers, Lodge members Glenn Davies, Hilary Jane and Ned Marks said:

"After many months of planning it all came together on the 14 March 2020. The weather was perfect, and a large turnout of family, friends and workmates came together for a 9.30am departure from John Scott Park Samford Village Queensland for the ride/drive to Maleny.


After a lunch break at Maleny, the ride headed back to Samford Village via Kilcoy and over Mt Glorious down into Samford Village where the ride/drive finished.

Family, friends, school mates, and work mates all gathered at the Samford Village Hotel for a night of celebration and further fundraising from sales of raffle tickets for the chance to win a hand painted helmet, a Brisbane Broncos fully signed jersey and a massive food hamper.

Everyone that attended the ride/drive and the night celebrations had a great time.

The Jarro family would like to thank everyone involved on the day for their support and generosity. The organisers Hilary, Glenn and Ned would especially like to thank the CFMEU State and National, Shane Grattan the Secretary of the Clermont Lodge for his support and input, the members of the Clermont Lodge for approving the sponsorship, Rod's family for giving us permission to hold the event in Rod's honour and his friends and workmates for their support. A special mention to Theresa Anderson for her outstanding artwork, design on the t-shirts and helmet, Kieran Nolan for organising the signed Broncos jersey, Rodney's family friend for the unexpected donation of the hamper worth \$300 and our hard-working raffle ticket selling girls."

A FINAL TALLY OF \$6,676 WAS RAISED AND THE RIDE FOR ROCKET WILL BE AN ANNUAL EVENT. WELL DONE TO ALL INVOLVED.



Scholarship students step up to coronavirus challenge

Congratulations to this year's crop of successful Mineworkers Trust Scholarship recipients. Twenty students across the country have been awarded the \$6250 scholarship to support their studies. However, just as the academic year got underway the COVID-19 pandemic has interrupted their studies.

Georgia Hughes was just three weeks into her Bachelor of Paramedicine studies at Australian Catholic University in Melbourne when face to face learning was suspended and she has moved to online learning.

It has been tough being unable to do any practical work, however it has allowed her to move back home to Traralgon where she grew up and her dad, CFMEU Member David Hughes, works at Loy Yang B power station.

So far, Georgia has loved the hands on nature of her paramedicine studies - *"it's very exciting, I always hated the idea of an office job"*. She hopes to become a fully qualified paramedic and then further advance her studies to become an intensive care paramedic.

The scholarship made a big difference to her, especially with covering temporary accommodation to relocate to Melbourne to start her degree.

Ari Patison from Avondale in the Illawarra is also committed to saving lives and supporting people's health, beginning her Bachelor of Medical Studies/ Doctor of Medicine at the University of New South Wales in Sydney this year.

Ari has moved to online learning, with practical learning including hospital sessions currently suspended. The scholarship assisted her to relocate to a rental in Sydney to reduce travel time and allow her to focus on her studies, but she has also temporarily moved home due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

Ari, whose dad Jack Patison works at Appin mine, has a long family history in coal, with her grandfather and great grandfather working in southern district coal mines. She will be required to work in rural or remote areas after the completion of her degree and hopes to work in mining communities.

"I feel as if without the opportunities that the mining industry has provided my family, I would not have had the opportunity to study the Bachelor of Medical Studies/Doctor of Medicine," she says. *"For this I am extremely grateful, and I hope that I will be able to repay the industry by providing medical care to those in this community."*

Well done to Ari, Georgia and all of this year's scholarship recipients.

Mineworkers Trust scholarships are awarded each year to CFMEU Mining and Energy members, family members and dependent who are undertaking study diploma level or higher at TAFE or university. They are assessed independently. Applications for 2021 will be available towards the of this year.



Look out for you, look out for your mates

COVID-19 has brought rapid and significant changes to our daily lives. MATES in Mining & Energy recognises the potential impact this can have on the mental health and wellbeing of workers in the mining and energy industries. Maintaining our mental health and wellbeing is crucial during times of high stress and uncertainty. It is very important that we not only look after ourselves but that we also look out for others, including our colleagues. That's what MATES is all about.

PRACTICING SELF-CARE

Now more than ever, we need to practice self-care. This means eating well and getting plenty of sleep. It means getting enough exercise because we know exercise helps to improve our mood. It is also important not to rely on alcohol or drugs to get you through or pass the time. Self-care also means reaching out for support when we need it.

CONFIDE IN SOMEONE

If you are feeling worried or concerned or just not yourself, it's helpful to talk about how you're feeling. If there is no one you feel you can talk to, then phone the MATES in Mining & Energy 24/7 Helpline on 1300 642 111 - we're here to help you.

HELPING OTHERS

If you notice someone acting a little differently, they may be struggling and need some help. Reach out to them. If someone you know isn't travelling well and you are not sure what to do, then phone the MATES in Mining & Energy 24/7 Helpline on 1300 642 111 - we're here to help you help your Mates.

STAYING CONNECTED

We are being asked to physically distance ourselves from others, so now more than ever we need to stay as connected as we can to family, loved ones and workmates via technology. It's important to use the phone, text messages, email and video technology (e.g. Facetime, Skype or Zoom) to remain connected to your important social networks. Staying connected to your support network will help foster a sense of normality where you can share feelings and remain socially active. Some people will be more affected than others so make a point of keeping in touch with those you may be concerned about.

DEVELOPING NEW ROUTINES

Many of our usual work, social and family routines have been impacted by the current situation. It's important to develop new daily routines, to plan out our days to restore a sense of purpose and normality to our daily life.

SWITCH OFF

Staying up to date with the situation is important, however, hearing about COVID-19 repeatedly can be upsetting. Regulate your access to information by taking breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories and social media posts.

MATES in Mining & Energy provides suicide prevention through community development programs on sites, and by supporting workers in need through case management and a 24/7 Helpline on 1300 642 111.

To find out how MATES can support your site during these tough times, please email info@matesinmining.org.au or go to our website at www.mates.org.au



Vale Fred Love, the 'Phantom Poet' of Kemira

The Illawarra is grieving the loss of Fred Love, who passed away on April 19, aged 73.

Fred started working at South Clifton Colliery in 1972, and after a year at South Bulli, returned to South Clifton until its closure in 1983. From 1988 he worked at Westcliff, finishing up in 1998.

Former General Secretary Barry Swan, and Central Councillor, Kevin Wiseman, have shared some of their memories of Fred Love. Kevin worked with Fred at South Clifton.

Fred was an active and committed member of the Miners Federation. He was known as the 'phantom poet' of the coal industry, who could use words to great effect. During the 1982 Kemira Dispute he penned "*The Ballad of Kemira*", which stands as a powerful and poetic description of the sit in.

In 1982 BHP marked 31 mineworkers at Kemira Colliery for the sack. The dispute was made famous for the 15 day sit in strike at the mine.

The Kemira sit-in sparked widespread community action that was to lead to the storming of Federal Parliament by thousands of workers and their supporters on 26 October 1982 when Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser refused to meet representatives of the miners and steel workers facing massive job losses. Fred Love was one of the first protesters through the doors of Parliament House.

In retirement he became heavily involved in community work within the Illawarra region. He worked with The House with No Steps and other organisations. He and his wife Dianne worked hard and successfully to promote the region as a tourist destination.

He was still active with Wollongong City Council's Community services as a mini-bus driver for the aged and infirm when he was taken ill.

Fred Love will be sadly missed by his former workmates and comrades in the South. Our Union pays tribute to his long commitment to the labour movement and to his local community.

THE BALLAD OF KEMIRA

As told to Fred Love by the Phantom Poet
South Clifton Colliery

*Thirty one miners dug in underground,
And Prime Minister Fraser cannot be found.
The men get support from all over Australia,
But the Government's weak and Fraser's a failure.*

*BHP said, you're getting the sack
Go down the hill, we don't want you back.
The men went in the pit and turned on their lights,
To fight for their jobs and all workers' rights.*

*The wives and the loved ones attend every day,
To give them support, for showing the way.
And hundreds of others turn up at the mine
To make sure the company don't get out of line.*

*And business people from far and from near -
Don't go around thinking that you're in the clear.
For if there's no money to fill up your tills,
You'll be in the same boat and taking the spills.*

*The steelworkers also are facing the sack,
Join together our forces, put BHP on the rack.
We must take some action and jobs we all need,
And stop this big company raping Australia for greed.*

*So workers of Wollongong, we must all unite,
Back up thirty one miners, for showing some fight.*



Protecting your health and safety during the COVID-19 pandemic

Mining is one of the industries that has, so far, remained operational during the COVID-19 outbreak across the country.

While it's a relief that most jobs have been maintained, we understand that continuing to work is causing stress and anxiety for Members, who have faced continually changing rules and working conditions as well as worrying about their own and their families' health.

Most mining companies are taking the issue seriously and implementing protocols around social distancing and hygiene in line with government health advice. However, some employers need to lift their game and some sites need to improve consistency in how measures are applied.

CFMEU members have reported a range of concerns from lack of enforced social distancing on site to overcrowding of vehicles and lack of sanitation for machinery and equipment. These concerns have been and continue to be investigated and addressed by Union safety inspectors and state regulators.

In addition to managing the risks associated with COVID-19, mine operators must of course continue to comply with all existing health and safety requirements under various legislation and must not use the pandemic as a green light to water down current employment or safety standards. The industry can't afford to go backwards on safety as it addresses the new challenges associated with COVID-19

As well as the risks of workers contracting COVID-19, we are also aware that there are other increased risks. These include mental health, with high stress levels for all workers at the moment. Non-residential workers are facing particular challenges, with some having to relocate interstate to avoid border closures

and greater restrictions on movement and exercise opportunities for workers in camp accommodation.

Fatigue is another challenge, with some rosters changing to limit transport movements there are concerns about the fatigue implications of changed and longer roster patterns. We know that some workers are also trying to catch up on sleep in houses full of family members working and learning from home, which can be extremely difficult.

The Union is committed to working with you to address and resolve every issue that comes up.

All Members should remember that every mine and power station in Australia is covered by strong health and safety laws, including protections against any adverse action being taken against workers who raise a safety concern.

We encourage any worker with a concern that their health and safety is not being protected in relation to COVID-19 to raise this in the first instance through existing issue resolution procedures in place at their mine site.

If the issue is not addressed to the worker's satisfaction, or they would like additional support, it should be raised with the site safety and health representative or a Union site or District representative.

Members should be reassured that they are protected by law when it comes to raising safety concerns. With COVID-19 as with any workplace safety issue, enforcing safety depends on workers standing up and speaking out - with the full support of the Union backing them up.

**GRAHAME KELLY,
GENERAL SECRETARY**