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Common Cause.



OS WORKERS DUDDERED AS BHP CUTS JOBS, ROSTERS, FLIGHTS

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BHP CUTS JOBS, CHANGES ROSTERS, CANCELS FLIGHTS AT MT ARTHUR

BHP has cut jobs, changed rosters and cancelled flights and accommodation for Operations Services workers at NSW's Mt Arthur coal mine, leaving many workers unable to continue their jobs.

Last week, BHP's Mt Arthur Coal mine in the Hunter Valley informed its Operations Services (OS) workforce that job numbers would be cut to four crews operating two excavators – about 110 workers down from 160 currently on site.

At the same time, OS workers were told their rosters would change from 7/7 to 5/4 and provision of paid flights and motel accommodation was being cancelled.

Northern District Vice President Jeff Drayton said the Union had been opposed to BHP introducing the 7/7 FIFO-style rosters and motel accommodation for OS workers at Mt Arthur because the jobs could easily be filled locally on residential rosters.

However, to introduce the model and then suddenly ditch it leaves many workers in the lurch, because they will be unable to fund their own transport and accommodation on the new roster.

"They should have listened to the community before the introduced the FIFO model, it would have stopped 160 people getting stuffed around," he said.

They've just changed the rules with no warning. There are OS workers travelling to Mt Arthur from Sydney, Queensland, even South Australia.

"It will be impossible for them if they now have to travel twice a week, not once a week, and fund their own flights and accommodation."

"Few of the current OS workforce live within the journey zone for daily commuting. But BHP will attempt to get out of paying any redundancies because their contracts say they can just get relocated anywhere on the east coast. That means they have to uproot their family or self-fund their commute from NSW to Queensland if they want to keep a job."

The Union is insisting on consultation over the changes to represent the interests of members at Mt Arthur. BHP has struggled to fill Operations Services positions at the Hunter Valley mine - a silver lining to the current changes is that they signal the demise of the divisive and unfair work model in NSW.

FLIGHT PAIN FOR QLD OS WORKERS

Queensland Operations Services workers are being forced to take leave and shell out above-market rates for flights, with BHP insisting they take charter flights rather than commercial flights due to COVID.

Although flights were covered for FIFO Operations Services in Queensland when they were hired last year, BHP subsequently cut payment for flights and insisted workers self-fund their commute.

Due to BHP's COVID protocols they are required to take specific charter flights to commute between their location of hire and the airport closest to their work location – for example, Brisbane to Moranbah.

Members have told the Union that now more commercial flights are available, the charter flights can be substantially higher than commercial airfares.

What's more, many OS workers are unable to secure charter flights that properly align with their 7/7 roster, meaning they have to take annual leave to get home on the same day as their last shift, or spend an extra night in camp.

The CFMEU is looking at options to secure fairer travel arrangements for OS FIFO workers.

Meanwhile, the Union's legal challenges to Operations Services Enterprise Agreements and OS workers being forced to work on Christmas and Boxing Day are continuing.



If you work for Operations Services, let us know the issues affecting you via our survey: www.thinkfairbhp.com.au/survey

www.commoncause.cfmeu.org.au

COAL MINER CHRIS DODD PROMOTES INDIGENOUS PRIDE THROUGH ART



Chris Dodd is an operator at Mangoola Open Cut Mine, CFMEU Anvil Hill Lodge member and accomplished artist.

His artwork 'Rainbow Serpent', depicting the Aboriginal legend of creation, now proudly hangs in the Union's Northern Mining and NSW Energy District Office in Cessnock.

Chris's family tribe is Wulli Wulli Wakka Wakka from the Western Downs region in South East Queensland.

About ten years ago, Chris moved from Queensland to the NSW Hunter Valley with his wife Shae and three children, Kai, Jaiden and Summer.

A former meatworker, Chris heard about the opportunities in mining and set about undertaking training and applying for jobs. After working as a contractor for a short period he secured a permanent job at Glencore's Mangoola Open Cut mine. As an active unionist from the start of his working life, joining the CFMEU was a no-brainer.

Throughout his life Chris has turned to art for relaxation, enjoyment and to promote understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal culture.

After becoming interested in art as a child, he honed his skills studying fine arts at Deakin University, where he expanded his knowledge of Aboriginal art techniques and his technical skills like colour mixing. Now, Chris uses his art to bring Aboriginal culture to a broad audience.

Since moving to Muswellbrook, Chris and Shae have been active in promoting NAIDOC celebrations at their children's schools with talks, face painting, art and even Aboriginal-themed cake decorating.

"It's about giving my kids and other indigenous pride in their heritage," says Chris. "NAIDOC Day is their day and they can stand up and have their culture celebrated."

Chris has designed a union shirt for the Anvil Lodge, his work can be seen in local murals and he recently sent an artwork to London for his first overseas commission.

He hopes that the Rainbow Serpent painting at the union office will be a symbol of pride for all members.

"The Rainbow Serpent is the first story I ever heard as a kid, being told about how the land was created.

"I hope people will take more time to understand these stories and understand the culture."

District President Peter Jordan said the Union was delighted to receive Chris's painting, which is displayed prominently and will be a permanent feature of the office.

"We've got a large number of indigenous members working across the mining and power industries. We're very proud of their history and proud to have them as part of this great union.

"Everyone that comes into the office notices and comments on this picture, we are going to cherish it."

NEW PODCAST OUT NOW!

The October Podcast looks at a new pilot project in Victoria's Latrobe Valley that uses brown coal to produce hydrogen and could kick off a new commercial industry creating mining jobs. commoncause.cfmeu.org.au/podcast



HYDROGEN OFFERS NEW FUTURE TO LATROBE VALLEY COAL

Hydrogen is being touted as the next generation fuel for cars, power stations and homes. A new pilot project in Victoria's Latrobe Valley will use brown coal to produce hydrogen for export to Japan and could kick off a new commercial industry.

In the first instance, the hydrogen made from Latrobe Valley coal will power vehicles during the Tokyo Olympics, which have been postponed until next year. Longer term, it is hoped the pilot plant will kick off a local commercial hydrogen industry and generate coal mining jobs to service it.

In the Latrobe Valley there's a dedicated hydrogen pilot plant coming online right between two existing power stations, Loy Yang A & B.

They're starving burning coal of enough oxygen that it forms carbon monoxide (CO) not carbon dioxide (CO₂) – then they add steam (H₂O) so the CO steals the oxygen and they end up with Hydrogen (H₂).

"We'll be burning coal and producing pure hydrogen with almost no carbon emissions," says Victorian District President Geoff Dyke.

"We still produce CO₂ in the process but because we're located near bass strait oil and gas fields there's a very good geological formation to pump CO₂ into, so it's locked up.

The project is funded to the tune of half a billion dollars.

Stumping up the cash is the Victorian and Australian Governments and Japan's Kawasaki industries as the Japanese are keen to showcase Australian hydrogen as the fuel powering their 2021 Olympics car fleet.

But really the 2021 Tokyo Olympics is just marketing. Ultimately the hydrogen plant in the Latrobe Valley is really about developing a new hydrogen industry in the land down under so we can eventually supply all the vehicles in Japan.

And countries all over the world for that matter.

With our abundant natural resources, we are perfectly placed to be the world's reservoir of pure, cheap hydrogen.

And if a commercial hydrogen industry kicks off in the LaTrobe Valley because of the hydrogen pilot plant local power station workers and coal miners would win big."

The coal volume required may increase which will increase jobs in mining," says Geoff Dyke.

"In energy production the skills are directly transferable to the production of hydrogen - if we've got a high-volume plant there'll probably be a growth in energy jobs as well."

The idea of the pilot project is to try and test the entire supply chain - manufacture the hydrogen, store it, truck it to Port Hastings, chill it to -253 degrees, put in on boats, and ship it to Japan.

The Japanese have already built one high-pressure vessel to carry our hydrogen.

The Suiso Frontier is a 116-meter (381-ft) monster fitted with a vacuum-insulated, double-shelled liquid hydrogen storage tank capable of holding 1,250 cubic meters (330,215 gal) of liquid hydrogen.

The ship will be unloaded at a new specially constructed terminal in Kobe, Japan.

"If we manufactured hydrogen at an export scale it probably wouldn't just be the Latrobe Valley, to get the volumes required, other regions could also produce hydrogen for export, and certainly we could use hydrogen hear for steel making," says Geoff Dyke.

"There's certainly potential for a lot of jobs across Australia if we're going to supply the world's transport systems with Hydrogen."



**VICTORIAN DISTRICT
PRESIDENT
GEOFF DYKE**

LISTEN TO OUR PODCAST FOR MORE ON THIS STORY: commoncause.cfmeu.org.au/podcast

KILL A WORKER GO TO JAIL: NEW INDUSTRIAL MANSLAUGHTER LAWS FOR WA



Western Australia's parliament has passed industrial manslaughter laws which will enforce a maximum penalty of 20 years' imprisonment for workplace deaths. Unions including the CFMEU campaigned fiercely for passage of the Work Health and Safety Bill.

"WA will go from having the weakest and most outdated workplace safety laws to having the best in Australia. "Rightly, the headline reform has been the introduction, for the first time in WA, of an offence of industrial manslaughter. "If a negligent driver causing a fatal accident can be charged with manslaughter, so too should an employer that badly mismanages a dangerous workplace. "Workplace rights such as those for safety, are won by disciplined struggle over many years by union members and that has been true for this reform." CFMEU Mining and Energy WA Secretary Greg Busson said unions had fought hard for the new laws which would add an extra layer of protection for workers. "We need real disincentives like jail time for employers for risking workers' safety, especially when big bucks from coal or iron ore production are at stake. A slap on the wrist isn't enough. "As usual the LNP and One Nation stalled and attempted to dilute the Bill. But the rally was a turning point for change. This is a great reform by the McGowan Government."

Last week, workers rallied outside Parliament House just days after construction apprentice Jonnie Hartshorn was killed on the job at Curtin University. The new bill includes penalties of between five and 20 years, imprisonment for individual employers and a maximum \$10 million fine for companies who knowingly engage in conduct resulting in an employee's death on site. Employers who neglect the safety of their employees, even if they could not have known it would cause their death, could be jailed for five years. Employers will also be prohibited from using insurance coverage to cover work health and safety penalties. Unions WA secretary Owen Whittle said it was a historic occasion and WA would have the strongest workplace safety laws in Australia.




WARNING TO CASUAL MINERS AS ADERO SETTLEMENT LEAVES WORKERS WITH 'DIDDLY SQUAT'

Casual coal miners should be wary about joining a class action being run by profit-driven litigation firm Adero after a Federal Court judge slammed a recent settlement for leaving workers with 'diddly squat'.

In a class action against marketing firm Appco over sham contracting arrangements leaving over 1000 workers with below-minimum pay and conditions, Adero estimated the claim was worth \$65 million. But Adero then recommended claimants settle for just \$1.9 million. Fifty percent of that sum - \$950,000 - would go to Adero's London-based litigation funder and a further \$40,000 would be spent on legal fees, leaving just \$910,000 to be divided between 1172 claimants. The Federal Court's Justice Michael Lee said he could not approve the Appco settlement on current information - given the enormous difference between the original valuation of claims and the proposed settlement.

"To say that causes alarm bells to be ringing would be a major understatement," said Justice Lee in a hearing last week. "Something has gone quite wrong in relation to the conduct of this class action ... people are going to get diddly squat." Adero is encouraging casual coal miners to join its class actions against a number of labour hire companies. But General President Tony Maher said Adero's profit-drive business model was about making money for lawyers and litigation funders, not getting justice for workers. "Adero market themselves as the battler's friend. However, the terrible result for Appco workers should make it clear that this mob will always put profit ahead of workers' interest. "If casuals want justice we encourage them to join the Union, join our class action and join our fight for fairer workplace laws to stop the 'permanent casual' rort. "One hundred percent of the funds we recover for our members is returned to them."





CHINA'S IMPORT BAN - WHAT WILL IT MEAN FOR COAL EXPORTS?

The still-unofficial news is that the Chinese government has told state-owned power utility and steel mills to stop importing Australian coal. How much does this mean?

On 12 October it was reported in business newsletters, and from there to major media in following days, that many coal-consuming businesses in China had been verbally ordered to stop using Australian coal. Nothing in writing; no formal directive issued.

This news does not stand in isolation – China has been implementing a cap on overall coal imports for a few years now, and so there has been a trend towards the end of each calendar year for coal to be stockpiled on ships or at port awaiting clearance. China has been doing this to manage domestic coal prices and production. While China has a long term plan to reduce coal use (see more below) it wants to manage the pace of that decline through managing coal prices and availability.

These import caps have generally been applied broadly to all sources, but this latest step seems to target just Australia.

The import caps and the latest targeting are both in breach of the Australia-China Free Trade Agreement, which has been shown (as with most trade treaties negotiated by Australia) to be one-sided and worthless to us.

How much does this matter? In simple terms China is the second largest destination for Australian coal. In first place is Japan, at 110 million tonnes (2019 figures), then China with a total of 93mt – 34.2mt of hard coking coal, 8.5mt of lower grade coking coal and 50mt of thermal coal. After that comes South Korea with 51mt, India with 49mt (mostly coking coal) and Taiwan with 34mt.

With total 2019 exports at 396mt, China is almost one quarter. In the order of \$15 billion per year. So it matters – quite a lot. To both the country and to the Australian coal industry.

Overall China is Australia's largest trading partner by a large margin. And it is the world's new superpower, gradually surpassing the United States in the next decades in a process that is somewhat inevitable though undoubtedly accelerated by Donald Trump's isolationism and dysfunction as US President.

Living with the United States was never exactly a bed of roses, with that country frequently interfering in other countries. But at least the USA was/is a liberal democracy while China has been an authoritarian one-party state for a long time.

This makes the process of "living with China" difficult.

Relations are currently at a low ebb, and so we now see coal exports being targeted. With various LNP politicians thinking they can mouth off about China to suit a domestic audience that problem doesn't look like being better managed anytime soon.

This latest large uncertainty in the coal industry has yet to play out decisively.

But wait there's more (though no set of free steak knives!).

While the Australian coal import ban may be unofficial, China has been very official about telling the United Nations on 22 September that it plans to reach peak greenhouse gas emissions before 2030 and to be carbon neutral (net zero emissions) before 2060. For a nation that produces about half the world's coal, and is the biggest source of heavy industry, that is a huge goal.

But China has a history of meeting its goals. While 2060 seems an eternity away, 2030 isn't. To cap emissions China will have to curtail fossil fuels. And because it wants to manage the decline of its domestic coal industry to minimise social unrest, it is bound to do so by reducing imports first.

So, one way or another, right now or in the next decade, China is going to be reducing coal imports. Anyone who thinks they can persuade the world's latest 800 pound gorilla to change its mind is welcome to try . . .



Government must stop reckless rhetoric to protect coal exports and jobs

Reckless and undiplomatic rhetoric about China from a number of Coalition MPs are putting needless pressure on coal jobs at a time of uncertainty in our trade relationship.

China buys about \$15 billion worth of Australian coal every year. That doesn't mean we should never criticise China. We need a robust relationship that acknowledges our differences.

But a relationship of this complexity and importance, at a time of such global uncertainty, must be responsibly managed by senior ministers and not left to headline-grabbers like Eric Abetz, George Canavan and Matt Canavan.

I wrote to Resources Minister Keith Pitt to express my concerns and ask him to pull his colleagues into line to protect Australian coal jobs. Here's my letter:

Dear Minister,

I write requesting your urgent attention regarding the most serious and immediate threat currently facing Australian coal jobs – the undiplomatic, reckless and sometimes bizarre anti-China rhetoric from a number of your colleagues in government.

As you would know, Chinese steel mills and state-owned utilities have been ordered by the Chinese Government to stop buying Australian coking and thermal coal. This is no idle threat. BHP and others have confirmed to us that Chinese customers have asked for deferrals of their coal orders.

I know there are some suggestions in the media that China's shift away from Australian coal is being driven more by market factors rather than politics. This is, as I imagine you recognise, nothing more than self-delusion by those who seek to wish away the acute importance of coal to China's energy and steel-making needs.

On a pure market basis, Australian coal presents as the most efficient and attractive option to Chinese buyers. But as has been made abundantly clear, the Chinese Government is willing to direct Chinese coal customers to accept less attractive options if it believes this will serve a national 'face saving' purpose.

It is, of course, impossible to quantify the precise value of 'face saving' to the Chinese regime. What is abundantly clear, however, is that aggressive and intemperate anti-China sentiment from figures in the government are tilting that equation hard against the interests of Australian coal jobs.

Examples of this in 2020 are numerous and I will not seek to list them here. But in just the past few days I note, for example, that Senator Eric Abetz has refused to apologise after bizarrely demanding three Chinese-Australians publicly condemn "the Chinese Communist party dictatorship."

Some of those Coalition MPs who represent coal regions and claim to support coal jobs, like Mackay-based MP George Christensen, are the most vocal in their attacks on China. I noted over the weekend that your predecessor Senator Matthew Canavan is suggesting that China's rejection of our coal is a positive because it will encourage the construction of new coal plants in Australia. I know I don't need to explain to you the stupidity of this argument. No number of new Australia coal plants could come remotely close to replacing the \$15 billion annual demand for Australian coal that China creates.

To be clear, I am not suggesting the Australian Government adopt a supine position in relation to China. Our nations have always had differences of opinion and these differences should be expressed robustly and constructively.

What I am suggesting, however, is that the complex matter of the 'national interest,' as it relates to China, should be left to those senior enough to operate effectively in the space – namely the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and the Trade Minister. Those government figures seeking to generate cheap headlines and name recognition from antagonising our most important trading partner should be pulled into line.

If this does not happen promptly the result will be devastating and ironic. Your government, which has claimed to champion Australia's coal industry, will have done more to damage it than any other Australian government in history.

The threat to Australian coal jobs from the reckless undermining of our trade relationship with China is immediate and dire.

I hold serious concerns that thousands of coal miners could lose their jobs before Christmas.

Please urge your colleagues to immediately drop the pointless machismo on China and leave the diplomacy to cooler, more senior, and more rational heads in the government.

Yours sincerely,
Tony Maher
General President
CFMEU Mining & Energy