

ADDRESS TO 115TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF THE QUEENSLAND COLLIERY
EMPLOYEES UNION.

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THANK YOU TO GLEN AND THE DISTRICT EXECUTIVE FOR THE INVITATION TO ATTEND AND PRESENT TONIGHT.

115 YEARS MAY SEEM A SLIGHTLY STRANGE ANNIVERSARY TO COMMEMORATE THE CREATION AND EXISTENCE OF A TRADE UNION, BUT 15 YEARS AFTER THE CENTENARY IS I GUESS AS THE SAYING GOES, BETTER LATE THAN NEVER.

INTERESTINGLY, WHILE WE CELEBRATE 115 YEARS SINCE THE CREATION OF THE QUEENSLAND COLLIERY EMPLOYEES UNION, IT WASN'T THE FIRST UNION OF COAL MINERS IN QUEENSLAND. THE QCEU HAD, AS ITS IMMEDIATE PREDECESSOR , THE WEST MORETON DISTRICT COAL MINERS UNION, FORMALLY REGISTERED UNDER THE THEN TRADE UNIONS ACT OF 1886, ON 17TH JULY 1906. THE WEST MORETON DISTRICT COAL MINERS UNION CAME INTO BEING AFTER SEVERAL UNSUCCESSFUL AND RELATIVELY SHORT LIVED ATTEMPTS TO CREATE COAL MINERS UNIONS IN THE LATE 1800'S ON THE WEST MORETON FIELD.

THE QCEU FORMALLY CAME INTO BEING WITH EFFECT FROM 1ST NOVEMBER 1908, WHEN, AN YOU'LL BE HAPPY TO KNOW THIS BULL, FOLLOWING A DECISION BY COAL MINERS AT BLUFF IN CENTRAL QUEENSLAND, WHO HAD FORMED THEIR OWN SMALL UNION ORGANISATION, TO LINK WITH THE WEST MORETON MINERS. AS A RESULT, AN APPLICATION

WAS MADE AND APPROVED TO CHANGE THE NAME OF THE WEST MORETON UNION TO THE QUEENSLAND COLLIERY EMPLOYEES UNION.

FROM THEN, THE UNION WOULD STEADILY GROW AS THE UNION EXECUTIVE, WITH TREMENDOUS ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FROM LOCAL ACTIVISTS, RECRUITED MINERS TO THE QCEU ACROSS THE DARLING DOWNS, BLAIR ATHOL AND JUST UP THE ROAD FROM BLUFF, THE VERY FIRST BLACKWATER BRANCH OF THE UNION. YES, THE CURRENT BLACKWATER LODGE MAY WELL CALL ITSELF BLACKWATER NO 1, BUT IT IS, IN TRUTH BLACKWATER NO 2.

AT THIS EARLY STAGE IN ITS LIFE, THE UNION WAS RUN FROM A ROOM IN THE FAMILY HOME OF THEN DISTRICT SECRETARY DAVID GLEDSON. GLEDSON WOULD SOME 8 YEARS LATER BECOME A MEMBER OF THE QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENT YET REMAIN AS TREASURER OF THE UNION. IT IS SURMISED THAT THE UNION FINALLY MOVED ITS HEADQUARTERS OUT OF DAVID GLEDSON'S FAMILY HOME AROUND 1912 INTO THE NATIONAL HALL, IN STATION ROAD, BOOVAL, WHERE IT WOULD THEN REMAIN UNTIL 1983 WHEN IT PURCHASED AND MOVED INTO A MODERN SIX STOREY BUILDING IN EAST STREET IPSWICH, WHERE IT THEN REMAINED UNTIL MOVING AGAIN TO BOWEN STREET, SPRING HILL AND OF COURSE, AS ALL HERE ARE FAMILIAR, ALSO INTO A SERIES OF OFFICES ACCOMODATING OFFICIALS AND STAFF THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

OVER THOSE FIRST 115 YEARS, WHAT WERE THE PRINCIPAL FEATURES OF THE UNION AND ITS ACTIVITIES? SAFETY AND HEALTH? JOB SECURITY? PAY AND CONDITIONS? SOCIAL JUSTICE? COMMUNITY WELL BEING? WELL PERHAPS A CLOSER EXAMINATION OF THOSE ACTIVITIES WILL SUGGEST THAT NO SINGLE FEATURE OR ACTIVITY STOOD OUT AS BEING MORE IMPORTANT, BUT ALL OF THEM WERE VERY MUCH IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE UNIONS AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.

SAFETY AND HEALTH, OF COURSE, GOES WITHOUT SAYING. THE HORRIFIC LIST OF DISASTERS, OTHER MULTIPLE AND SINGLE DEATHS AND APPALLING INJURIES AND WORK RELATED DISEASES ARE RECORD ENOUGH OF THE IMPERATIVE FOR THE UNION TO CONCENTRATE ON AND TAKE ACTION OVER SAFETY AND HEALTH ISSUES. WITHOUT BECOMING TOO MORBID ON AN EVENING SUCH AS THIS, NAMES SUCH AS MOUNT MULLIGAN, KIANGA, MOURA, BOX FLAT AND COLLINSVILLE WILL LIVE FOREVER IN OUR MEMORY. THERE ARE FAR TOO MANY COAL MINERS WHOSE LAST DAYS ON EARTH WERE SPENT WORKING AT A COAL MINE.

SO TOO THE TOLL FROM INSIDIOUS DISEASES LIKE PNEUMOCONIOSIS, COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS BLACK LUNG, AS A RESULT OF MINERS EXPOSURE TO COALDUST RESULTING PRIMARILY FROM POOR VENTILATION. AND IT IS AN INDICTMENT ON CURRENT AND PASSED REGULATORY AUTHORITIES AND IN PARTICULAR EMPLOYERS, THAT THE UNION TO THIS DAY, HAS TO FIGHT, PROTEST, LOBBY AND THREATEN INDUSTRIAL ACTION OVER WORKERS EXPOSURE TO THESE SORTS OF WORKPLACE DISEASES. WITNESS, FOR EXAMPLE, THE BLACK LUNG CAMPAIGN AND THE TARDINESS BY AUTHORITIES, INCLUDING GOVERNMENTS, OVER IMPLEMENTING A BAN ON ENGINEERED STONE. THE DUST FROM WHICH IS ANOTHER KNOWN WORKPLACE KILLER.

IT IS **NOT**, AS THE PRESIDENT OF TURKEY ONCE INFAMOUSLY SAID FOLLOWING THE DISASTER AT THE SOMA UNDERGROUND MINE WHEN 301 MINERS WERE KILLED – “IT IS THE FATE OF THE MINER TO DIE IN THE MINE “- IT IS IN FACT AND IN TRUTH THE **RIGHT** OF EVERY MINER TO RETURN HOME SAFE AND WELL AT THE END OF THEIR SHIFT.

THE UNION HAS HISTORICALLY AND REMAINS PROACTIVE IN ITS DEFENCE OF WORKERS HEALTH AND SAFETY. ONE OF ITS PRINCIPAL FUNCTIONS IS THE ELECTION OF DISTRICT CHECK INSPECTORS. I NOTE HERE THAT FOR MANY YEARS “CHECK INSPECTOR” WAS THE

OFFICIAL DESIGNATION OF THE NOW DISTRICT UNION INSPECTOR, BUT WAS CHANGED ALLEGEDLY AT THE BEHEST OF THE MINES DEPARTMENT INSPECTORS WHO THOUGHT THE DESIGNATION MEANT THE UNION ELECTED "CHECKIES" WERE IN PART CHECKING ON THEM; WHICH TO A SIGNIFICANT EXTENT THEY WERE. UNTIL THE 1930'S, THE ROLE OF CHECK INSPECTOR WAS COMBINED WITH OTHER EXECUTIVE POSITIONS, AFTER WHICH THE CHECK INSPECTOR ROLE WAS FULL TIME AND STAND ALONE. SOME OF OUR CURRENT CHECKIES, MIGHT LIKE TO APPRECIATE THAT THE VERY FIRST FULL TIME CHECK INSPECTOR, JACK POCOCK, CONDUCTED HIS INSPECTIONS IN THE WEST MORETON AFTER TRAVELLING TO MINES ON A PUSH BIKE.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL CHECK INSPECTOR (NOWADAYS MINERS OFFICER) IS ALSO A CRITICALLY IMPORTANT ROLE, WITH LOCALLY ELECTED, OTHERWISE FULL TIME EMPLOYEES OF THE COAL COMPANY, EMPOWERED TO DIRECT THAT WORK CEASE IF AN UNSAFE CONDITION IS DEEMED TO EXIST.

THE UNION HAS, AND I AM CONFIDENT WILL, CONTINUE TO PLACE ITSELF IN THE FOREFRONT OF DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THE SAFEST POSSIBLE CONDITIONS EXIST IN OUR MINES AND OTHER WORKPLACES.

JOB SECURITY HAS AND CONTINUES TO BE A MAJOR FOCUS OF THE UNION'S WORK. FROM THE ABOLITION OF CONTRACT MINING AND SO-CALLED PIECE RATES; TO THE FALLOUT FROM THE INTRODUCTION OF MECHANISATION; TO THE POWER STATION CLOSURES AND THE DECIMATION OF THE WEST MORETON FIELD, TO THE ULTIMATE TRANSITION AWAY FROM FOSSIL FUELS IN THE COMBATTING OF CLIMATE CHANGE; AND NOW TO THE INSECURITY AND THE ABUSE OF LABOUR HIRE AND CONTRACT WORK BY MAJOR MINING

COMPANIES; THE UNION HAS BEEN FRONT AND CENTRE IN CAMPAIGNING FOR PROPER AND FAIR TREATMENT OF WORKERS AFFECTED BY THESE CHANGES.

STAY DOWN STRIKES, EXTENSIVE LOBBYING OF POLITICIANS FROM BOTH SIDES OF POLITICS, AND MAJOR AND INNOVATIVE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS, HAVE ALL BEEN FEATURES OF PAST, PRESENT AND, I AM SURE, FUTURE CAMPAIGNS IN THIS REGARD. AND WHILE NOT ALL OF THE CAMPAIGNS HAVE BEEN AS SUCCESSFUL AS WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKED, I HAVE CONFIDENCE THAT CAMPAIGNS LIKE THE CURRENT "CLOSING THE LOOPHOLES" WILL AT THE VERY LEAST HAVE SOME HIGH DEGREE OF BENEFICIAL OUTCOME.

WHAT I HAVE TERMED **SOCIAL JUSTICE**, AGAIN HAS LONG BEEN A FEATURE OF THE UNION'S PSYCHE. FROM AS FAR BACK AS 1913, AND IN THE FACE OF WHAT AT THE TIME WAS A RAMPANT "WHITE AUSTRALIA" POLICY, THE DISTRICT COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT ADMITTED AS A MEMBER AN AMERICAN NEGRO WHO WAS WORKING AT THE NEWCASTLE MINE AT BLAIR ATHOL. DOUBTLESS THIS WOULD BARELY RAISE AN EYEBROW NOW BUT IN 1913 WAS A BRAVE AND DECENT STEP. IN A SIMILAR VAIN, IN FEBRUARY 1979, THE SOUTH BLACKWATER BRANCH OF THE UNION ENROLLED THE FIRST FEMALE MEMBERS OF THE UNION, NOTWITHSTANDING THAT THE "COAL MINING ACT" EXPRESSLY FORBADE THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN UNDERGROUND. THE WOMEN WERE EMPLOYED ON THE SURFACE. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, FOUR WOMEN WERE EMPLOYED IN THE WASHERY AT MOURA. A COUPLE OF YEARS LATER, ONE OF THE MOURA FIRST STARTERS WAS SEVEN MONTHS PREGNANT AND PRESENTED HER EMPLOYER TDM (THE "D" STANDING FOR DAMPIER MINING COMPANY - A WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY OF THE BIG AUSTRALIAN BHP AND A COMPANY THAT TODAY CITES GENDER DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURISM AS REASONS IT NEEDS TO KEEP A SEPARATE WHOLLY OWNED SUBSIDIARY LABOUR HIRE COMPANY TO MEET ITS POLICY OBLIGATIONS - I CALL BULLSHIT ON MIKE HENRY AND HIS

ACCOLYTE MANAGERS)) FROM HER DOCTOR RECOMMENDING SIX MONTHS LEAVE OF ABSENCE. THE BIG AUSTRALIAN, WHICH MANAGED THE MINE, REFUSED TO GRANT THE LEAVE; TOLD HER SHE WAS BEING PAID OFF; AND IF AND WHEN SHE WANTED TO RETURN TO WORK, SHE WOULD HAVE TO APPLY FOR A JOB. THE UNION TOOK THE MATTER TO THE COAL BOARD OF REFERENCE, WON HER THE RIGHT TO BE RE-EMPLOYED, WITHOUT LOSS OF CONTINUITY OF SERVICE FOR LONG SERVICE LEAVE PURPOSES, WHEN SHE SAW FIT. IN A REMARKABLE TURN OF EVENTS, HER SON WAS BORN ON THE DAY OF THE DECISION. SHE RETURNED TO WORK IN HER FORMER ROLE WHEN SHE WAS READY. IN EFFECT, THE UNION SECURED EFFECTIVELY ONE OF THE FIRST MATERNITY LEAVE PROVISIONS FOR BLUE COLLAR WORKERS IN THE COUNTRY.

ON ANOTHER FRONT, THE QCEU, ALONG WITH OTHER UNIONS IN THE COAL INDUSTRY, WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN DEFEATING A MALCOLM FRASER/JOHN HOWARD GOVERNMENT ATTEMPT TO TAX WORKERS IN SUBSIDISED HOUSING PROVIDED BY MINING COMPANIES ON THE ASSUMED VALUE OF THE REAL RENTAL FOR THE HOUSES AND SINGLE PERSONS ACCOMMODATION. A RELENTLESS AND INCREDIBLY WELL ORGANISED CAMPAIGN, INCLUDING SOME 13 WEEKS OF STRIKE ACTION BY ALMOST 4500 MINEWORKERS, RESULTED IN A DRAMATIC BACKDOWN BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, AND A REPRIEVE FROM A PUNITIVE TAX, NOT ONLY ON MINEWORKERS, BUT EVERY WORKER IN EVERY INDUSTRY IN THE COUNTRY WHO HAD THE BENEFIT OF EMPLOYER SUBSIDISED ACCOMODATION.

YET ANOTHER IMPORTANT VICTORY FOR THE UNION AND FOR THE WIDER INDUSTRIAL WORKFORCE AROSE SOMEWHAT UNEXPECTEDLY OUT OF THE SECOND MOURA UNDERGROUND DISASTER IN 1986. AS IT TURNED OUT, A NUMBER OF THE MINERS WHO DIED HAD BEEN IN DEFACTO RELATIONSHIPS, OFTEN WITH CHILDREN. UNDER QUEENSLAND LAW AT THE TIME, DEFACTO RELATIONSHIPS WERE NOT RECOGNISED FOR THE PURPOSES

OF THE SO-CALLED "COMMON LAW PRACTICES ACT" - THE LEGISLATION THAT PERMITS DEPENDANTS OF WORKERS KILLED OR INJURED AT WORK TO SUE THE EMPLOYER FOR NEGLIGENCE AND THEREBY DAMAGES COMPENSATION. DEPSITE ATTEMPTS TO CONVINCED THE THEN QUEENSLAND PREMIER WAYNE GOSS AND HIS CHIEF OF STAFF (A BLOKE BY THE NAME OF KEVIN RUDD) THE GOVERNMENT REFUSED TO INTRODUCE RETROSPECTIVE LEGISLATION TO PERMIT THE DEFACTOS TO SUE BHP. THE UNION THREATENED A WEEK LONG STATE WIDE STRIKE TO WHICH BHP REACTED BY CONFIRMING THEIR LAWYERS WOULD NOT RAISE AN OBJECTION TO THE DEFACTOS ABILITY TO SUE. THEY DIDN'T AND THE WIDOWED DEFACTOS AND DEPENDANT CHILDREN WERE ULTIMATELY TREATED AS LEGALLY MARRIED FOR THE PURPOSES OF COMPENSATORY DAMAGES. THE GOSS GOVERNMENT ULTIMATELY AMENDED THE ACT TO GIVE ALL DEFACTOS THE SAME RIGHTS AS LEGALLY MARRIEDS. I DISTINCLY RECALL A SHORT TIME LATER A VERY GRATEFUL DEFACTO WIDOW, A SISTER OF ONE OF THE UNION'S LOCAL DELEGATES, PROFUSELY THANKING THE UNION FOR WHAT IT DID AFTER THE DEATH OF HER DEFACTO HUSBAND IN A NON COAL WORKPLACE INCIDENT.

SO IT IS NOT ONLY WHAT THE UNION HAS DONE FOR ITS MEMBERS, BUT WHAT IT UNCONCIOUSLY HAS DONE FOR THE WIDER COMMUNITY THROUGH ITS ACTIONS THAT ARE IMPORTANT. EVEN IF MORE OFTEN THAN NOT THOSE ACTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS ARE OVERLOOKED OR FORGOTTEN, OR JUST SIMPLY NOT KNOWN OF. AND THIS IS BUT A SMALL LIST OF WHAT HAS BEEN DONE.

TO PAY AND CONDITIONS, AND I DON'T NEED TO REMIND MOST MEMBERS OF THE UNION, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE INDUSTRIES IN WHICH THEY ARE EMPLOYED THAT THEIR GENERAL PAY AND CONDITIONS ARE THE ENVY OF MOST BLUE COLLAR WORKERS. I MAKE THE

OBVIOUS EXCEPTION HERE OF LABOUR HIRE AND CONTRACT WORKERS, STILL SUFFERING BECAUSE OF THE BASTARDRY OF MAINLY BIG EMPLOYERS – BUT OF COURSE REMEDIES ARE CURRENTLY BEING SOUGHT FOR THAT ABOMINABLE SITUATION.

THE UNION WON THE EARLIEST AND ONLY TO MY KNOWLEDGE, FULLY TRANSPORTABLE NATIONAL LONG SERVICE LEAVE SCHEME FOR BLUE COLLAR WORKERS IN THE COUNTRY. CHANGES MADE TO THAT SCHEME OVER THE YEARS, LEAVE IT AS ONE OF IF NOT THE BEST LSL SCHEMES IN THE COUNTRY AND ONE WHICH IN A RELATIVELY RECENT INQUIRY INTO LONG SERVICE LEAVE SCHEMES, WAS RECOMMENDED AS A FUTURE MODEL FOR ALL INDUSTRY SCHEMES.

THE UNION WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN WINNING A PENSION SCHEME FOR COAL MINeworkERS, WITH LEGISLATION TAKING EFFECT IN QUEENSLAND ON AND FROM 5TH JANUARY 1942. THE LEGISLATION NOT ONLY AWARDED A PENSION, BUT PROVIDED FOR COMPULSORY RETIREMENT ON THAT PENSION FROM AGE SIXTY. IN THE LATE 1960'S, AND WELL BEFORE INDUSTRY SUPERANNUATION BECAME PART OF THE ALP/ACTU ACCORD PROCESS, THE QUEENSLAND PENSION SCHEME BEGAN ITS PROGRESSION TO THE FULLY FLEDGED INDUSTRY SUPERANNUATION SCHEME IT IS TODAY. I CAN PROUDLY SAY THAT MY LATE FATHER CYRIL WAS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THAT PROCESS.

AND FINALLY IN WHAT COULD OTHERWISE BE A VERY EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF PAY AND CONDITIONS VICTORIES FOR THE UNION, I WANT TO TURN BRIEFLY TO DISABUSE A GROWING MISCONCEPTION AND ATTEMPTED REVISION OF HISTORY OVER THE PROVISION OF HOUSING FOR MINERS AND THEIR FAMILIES. TOO OFTEN NOW I SEE COMMENTS, OFTEN BUT NOT SOLELY ON SOCIAL MEDIA, CREDITING THE BJELKE PERTERSEN GOVERNMENT WITH REQUIRING COAL MINING COMPANIES IN THE 1960'S AND ONWARDS TO BUILD HOUSES AND IN MANY CASES WHOLE NEW TOWNSHIPS TO ACCOMMODATE WORKERS AND

THEIR FAMILIES WHO SERVICE THE MINES. **WRONG, WRONG, WRONG.** IT WAS THIS UNION, THE QCEU WHO FORCED THAT REQUIREMENT ON COAL COMPANIES AND IT STARTED AT MOURA WHERE THIESS PEABODY MITSUI (TPM) MANAGED BY THE AMERICAN COMPANY PEABODY EXPECTED FAMILIES TO LIVE IN CORRUGATED IRON AND BRATTICE CLOTH HUMPIES ON THE BANKS OF THE DAWSON RIVER, WITH NO SANITATION AND NO POTABLE DRINKING WATER. A CAMPAIGN BY THE UNION, CULMINATING IN A HEARING IN FRONT OF THE THEN COAL INDUSTRY TRIBUNAL, JUSTICE FRANK GALLAGHER, RESULTED IN PEABODY BACKING DOWN, AFTER INITIALLY ONE OF ITS EXECUTIVES ADVISED THE TRIBUNAL FROM THE WITNESS BOX “ WE CAME HERE TO MINE COAL, NOT BUILD HOUSES”. HOUSES WERE BUILT IN MOURA, BY THE COMPANY AND BY THE QHC, AND EVERY SUBSEQUENT NEW MINE DEVELOPMENT DIDN’T GET OFF THE GROUND WITHOUT COMPANIES NOT ONLY BUILDING HOUSES BUT IN A NUMBER OF CASES, WHOLE TOWNS FROM SCRATCH. IT WASN’T A REQUIREMENT OF THE LEASE CONDITIONS IMPOSED BY ANY QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT, IT CERTAINLY WASN’T A REQUIREMNT OF ANY BJELKE PETERSEN GOVERNMENT; IT WAS A REQUIREMENT OF A POLICY DECISION OF THE QCEU, SUPPORTED BY THE MEMBERSHIP AND ENFORCED THROUGH A UNION CAPACITY TO STOP NEW LABOUR BEING SUPPLIED TO MINES IN THE EVENT THAT ADEQUATE ACCOMMODATION WAS NOT AVAILABLE.

SO AT 135 YEARS OF AGE, THE QUEENSLAND COLLIERY EMPLOYEES UNION, ITS OFFICIALS, DELEGATES AND IMPORTANTLY MEMBERS, HAVE A LOT TO BE PROUD OF; A LOT TO LOOK BACK ON WITH GREAT PRIDE AND A LOT TO LOOK FORWARD TO WITH A CONTINUATION OF THE APPLICATION OF PRINCIPLE, SOLIDARITY AND MILITANCY THAT ARE INHERENT FEATURES OF ITS BEING.

I ONCE HEARD A VERY SENIOR EXECUTIVE OF THE FORMER UTAH DEVELOPMENT COMPANY THAT COMMENCED THE OPERATION OF BLACKWATER, GOONYELLA, PEAK DOWNS, SARAJI

AND NORWICH PARK MINES BOAST AND I QUOTE "I WILL SEE THE SUN SET ON THE MINERS UNION". SUFFICE TO SAY AND TO SLIGHTLY PLAGIARISE AND TWIST THE WORDS OF A BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN SONG "WE'RE STILL HERE BUT HE'S ALL GONE". YOU CAN BE PROUD THAT HE WAS VERY WRONG AND THAT THE UNION PROVED HIM SO!

I HAVE OF COURSE NOT SPOKEN IN ANY DETAIL ABOUT THE OTHER SEGMENTS OF THE UNION, THE ENERGY SECTOR AND THE COAL PORTS SECTOR. THIS IS NOT OUT OF ANY DISRESPECT FOR THOSE SECTORS NOR THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO WORK IN THEM OR THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTION THEY BRING TO THIS WONDERFUL UNION. IT IS MERELY BECAUSE THAT THIS IS THE QCEU 115 YEARS ANNIVERSARY AND FOR THE SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THAT 115 YEARS THAT IS WHAT IT WAS, A COLLIERY EMPLOYEES UNION. I AM ALSO MINDFUL OF THE FACT, THAT THE INCORPORATION OF THE PORTS AND ENERGY WORKERS WAS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE CFMEU CREATION AND I AM ALSO ACUTELY AWARE THAT THE GREAT BULK OF THE MEMBERSHIP HAS VOTED TO END THAT MARRIAGE AND THAT THE DIVORCE MAY WELL BE FINALISED ON THE 1ST DECEMBER. OF COURSE THIS DOES NOT MEAN THE PORTS AND ENERGY SECTOR WILL BE DISENFRANCHISED, THEY WILL REMAIN AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE NEW MINING AND ENERGY UNION.

IN CONCLUSION, CONGRATULATIONS ON WHAT YOU HAVE ACHIEVED; CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU FOR STILL DEFENDING AND PROMOTING WORKERS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES RIGHTS AND CONDITIONS AND I WISH YOU EVERY SUCCESS FOR THE NEXT 115 YEARS.