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July 2024



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**Mining &
Energy
Union**

UNION WIN!



'THE GREATEST INCREASE WE'VE EVER WON'

Blast crews employed by Orica at Boggabri mine have voted up a new improved enterprise agreement which will deliver five-figure pay rises in the first year after growing union density on site.

The new agreement includes:

- 20 to 26% percentage increase in the first year, depending on classification
- Improved year on year increases in subsequent years
- Provision of total load allowance.

Orica Delegate Trent Donoghue and Brad Gander were on the bargaining committee. Trent said that the new agreement would deliver pay rises depending on classification, bringing Orica shotfirers to the top end of industry standards.

"We've been advised that this is one of the greatest cumulative percentage increases that we've ever won, and members are incredibly pleased by what we have accomplished.

Trent said that negotiations were so fruitful due to building density on site, increased union activity and strong leadership from the union.

"On my crew for example we grew density from around 60% to over 90%.

"Our local Organiser Adam Lain was instrumental in highlighting to non-union members the benefits of union membership and also the benefits of union density, especially with upcoming EA negotiations.

Adam was able to achieve this over multiple site visits prior to and during negotiations.

Trent said that an important gain was the total load allowance which blast crews were previously excluded from.

"As blast crews we perform 'down the hole' functions, but we also perform work that spans all aspects of the explosives loading process. The work we do is also very physically demanding so to have that recognised through the total load allowance is very important.

"We've been able to achieve a lot working together. We really need to send a massive shout out to District Vice President Mick Taggart for his leadership and guidance on this matter. We would not have got this outcome without his support which was instrumental to our success."

Mick Taggart said that this win highlighted the importance of people coming together through the union to negotiate a better deal and that union involvement is key to workers improving their position.

100% of eligible workers voted 'yes' to the new agreement. The new EA brings the Orica shotfirers' conditions up to the top end of industry standards in the coal industry across Australia and contains all provisions of the Black Coal Award.



SAME JOB SAME PAY: APPLICATIONS AND WINS

Momentum is building for Same Job Same Pay as our Union continues to make applications and the first order from the Fair Work Commission has been handed down.

First order at Callide mine

Hundreds of labour hire workers at Batchfire's Callide mine at Biloela in Central Queensland are in line for a pay rise after the Fair Work Commission made the historic decision to issue the first order under new Same Job Same Pay laws on 1 July.

The order covers almost 350 labour hire mineworkers employed by Workpac at Callide. It means their pay must be lifted to match rates under the Batchfire Enterprise Agreement covering permanent employees. Workpac employees at Callide mine generally receive about \$10,000 to \$20,000 less than Batchfire employees a year and the order would close this gap from 1 November this year.

MEU member and Workpac production operator Josh Stevens is one of the workers in line for a pay rise in November after being labour hire at Callide mine for six years.

"This pay rise will have a very strong impact, particularly since I've just started a family. I now have a daughter who is just two months old, and this

pay rise will help go towards the essential things like housing, groceries, bills, nappies and baby clothes," said Josh.

"At the mine, the majority of workers are labour hire, so that means hundreds of workers are likely to get a pay rise. This will be good for our community since it is a tight-knit community where we all know each other.

"I think more people will want to continue living in the local area if we are all treated fairly and being paid the same."

Applications at Bengalla Mine

Earlier this month the MEU filed two more Same Job Same Pay applications in the Fair Work Commission covering labour hire coal miners at Bengalla open cut mine in the Hunter Valley.

Two applications, covering labour hire workers employed by CoreStaff and Skilled Workforce Solutions have been submitted. The applications cover about 150 employees working for both labour hire companies at the mine in Muswellbrook, which

is owned by New Hope Group.

The pay difference between Skilled Workforce Solutions workers and permanent employees at Bengalla can sometimes be up to \$40,000. The pay difference between CoreStaff workers and permanent employees at Bengalla can sometimes be up to \$50,000.

Once an order from the Fair Work Commission comes into effect it would lift pay of labour hire workers in line with the terms of the Bengalla Mine Enterprise Agreement and deliver pay rises to labour hire workers performing work on roster patterns covered by the Agreement.

BHP applications get a boost from the Prime Minister

On the weekend, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese gave our Same Job Same Pay applications against BHP a boost.

We have filed 10 applications for regulated labour hire arrangement orders covering approximately 1700 labour hire workers employed by WorkPac, Chandler Macleod and BHP subsidiary Operations Services at Peak Downs, Saraji and Goonyella Riverside open cut mines in Central Queensland's Bowen Basin.

BHP has flagged its intention to fight our applications against Operations Services, arguing that OS are 'service contractors,' not labour hire, and thus exempt from Same Job Same Pay orders.

While BHP will throw everything at trying to avoid getting an order, we are confident that OS workers meet the conditions for the regulated labour hire arrangement orders we have applied for and are emboldened that the Federal Government will back in our case.

The Prime Minister has announced that Federal Government lawyers will intervene to back the MEU's case for Same Job Same Pay for Operations Services workers.

On Saturday, PM Albanese said "We will send federal Government lawyers to back the workers and the unions in their case against the labour hire company Operational Services ... to send a very clear message to companies that are fighting to keep these loopholes open to undercut wages and conditions. When we pass a law about a fair go at work – we back the words with action."

There are also applications for Same Job Same Pay orders before the Fair Work Commission at Rix's Creek mine and Boggabri mine in NSW, and Poitrel mine in QLD.

SAME JOB SAME PAY COMING TO COLLIDE MINE!





GROSVENOR WORKERS SHAKEN BY EXPLOSION

Workers at the Grosvenor mine shut by an underground fire and explosion last month are waiting to see what the future holds after agreement was reached with Anglo to extend pay and offer redeployment pathways where possible.

In the early hours of 29 June, workers were evacuated after fire spread through the mine. All made it to safety but it was a traumatic event for workers, especially those who experienced the devastating underground explosion at the mine in May 2020, seriously injuring five men. Smoke billowed over the town of Moranbah for days until the fire was brought under control with the help of a GAG unit.

Anglo has been in regular consultation with unions and has committed to paying workers as normal until 31 August, giving the company time to consider workforce needs regarding management and recovery of the Grosvenor mine.

Queensland District President Mitch Hughes said that the week of the incident had been an extremely difficult and traumatic period for the Grosvenor workforce. However, it was a relief that workers would know that they have financial security for the immediate term and will receive support to secure their on-going employment.

Grosvenor Lodge President Steve Hall said that they had been in constructive talks with Anglo American.

“We are currently meeting with Anglo three times a week to discuss what happens next to the

workforce, as well as the future of Grosvenor underground mine.

“We are pleased that talks are more constructive than they have been during past incidents, due to several factors but importantly because we have a strong Lodge in place now.

Steve said that while no one was physically injured in this incident, the events left many workers traumatised, particularly after a similar event in 2020 left five workers with extensive burns.

“In addition to mapping out a plan for workers’ employment, what we’re really looking at is ensuring the mental wellbeing of members.

“We’re seeing a lot of people struggling psychologically at the moment, particularly those who have been involved in previous incidents.

“Recent events have been very triggering for workers who can’t fathom how something like this has happened again.

We need to remember that this is the third incident in four years for some of these workers.”

He said that the Lodge would continue working to support members and their families throughout this time.

Steve also said that MEU would continue talks with the company to ensure individuals are supported with options that work for them and their families; and that commitments are followed through.



POWER STATION WORKERS URGE SENATORS TO PASS AUTHORITY BILL

MEU members in power stations are urging Senators to urgently pass laws to establish an Authority to support power station workers.

The Net Zero Economy Authority Bill is currently before the Senate, however it did not win the support of cross-benchers before Federal Parliament closed for the winter recess in early June.

The Authority will have the important twin goals of supporting workers displaced by power station closures into new jobs and co-ordinating investment to drive economic diversification in energy regions.

It will administer workforce plans for power stations facing closure, with the ability to create pooling arrangements with local employers to transfer

displaced workers into new jobs.

The legislation puts obligations on the closing entities to provide certainty and support to employees during the closure process.

Bayswater Power Station delegate Glenn Kollner travelled to Canberra earlier this month, to meet with cross-bench Senators and urge them to pass the Bill.

“A lot of energy workers are anxious to have an authority to protect their communities and jobs; and help them transition into new jobs. We need that support. A lot of areas haven’t got the infrastructure in place to keep employing workers. We need to get this Authority established.”



QUEENSLAND DISTRICT CELEBRATES GROWTH, PLANS FOR FUTURE

Our Queensland District held a successful quadrennial convention in Rockhampton last week, with delegates from mines, power and ports debating challenges and future priorities.

The District has experienced significant change since the last convention was held in 2020, including a change of leadership with the departure of Stephen Smyth to the national office and election of Mitch Hughes as District President; along with new Vice-Presidents Brodie Brunker, Jeff Pearce and Heath Timmins.

District membership has grown from 6800 in 2020 to about 8500 members today, with future plans focused on continuing growth and effective representation of members.

The Queensland District's many achievements over the past four years include:

- Australia's first Same Job Same Pay orders under new laws at Callide mine
- Reduction of respirable mine dust levels due to union campaigning
- Multiple legal victories against BHP including challenges to substandard OS agreements, public holiday rights and exposing Australia's biggest wages underpayment
- Significant unfair dismissal wins for labour hire members
- New Lodges established at Poitrel and Carmichael mines.

There have also been significant challenges during the last four years including four fatalities in Queensland coal mines and serious workplace incidents including explosions at Callide power station and recently at Grosvenor underground mine. ISHR Stephen Woods' death from cancer in May has also been a sad loss for the District.

Delegates discussed safety, legal developments, organising, communications and politics, with presentations from officials, staff and guests including Queensland Senator and Emergency Services Minister Murray Watt and Anne Baker, former Isaac Mayor and now candidate for Burdekin in the upcoming Queensland State election.

District President Mitch Hughes said the Convention was a positive event where delegates engaged in constructive debate about the future.

"Our District is growing but we have a lot more to do to reach our full potential. Encouraging members to step up into active positions in the Union is essential to our continuing growth and success.

It was great to have new faces at this year's Convention and I look forward to many more people getting involved and having a say in decision-making over the four years ahead."

NEW FACES, SAME VALUES

**GENERAL SECRETARY,
GRAHAME KELLY**



With our General Election now concluded, we are farewelling some long-term officials and welcoming some new faces who have already hit the ground running to serve members and build our union.

I wish our departing South Western District President Graeme Osborne (pictured below, right) on his well-deserved retirement. This comes after decades of service to the Union and our members.



A lifelong Lithgow resident, Graeme started his career over 40 years ago as an underground miner at Angus Place Colliery. In 2004, he was elected to serve as the Vice President of the South Western District, and he succeeded Andy Honeysett as District President in 2019.

Embodying the MEU values of standing up for miners and mining communities, Ozzie has earned widespread respect as a champion for MEU members and a person always willing to talk through the issues at hand.

In addition to his work directly with the Union, Graeme serves on the boards of Westfund and Coal Services. In these positions Ozzie has consistently advocated for the interests of mining and energy workers, their families, and communities. Ozzie is perhaps best known as a local Rugby League legend and long-time coach of the Lithgow Workies Wolves' Group 10 team. I know that he will continue through his on-going involvement with industry bodies and advocacy for Lithgow's economic future.

On behalf of the Mining and Energy Union I wish him all the best in his well-earned retirement.

Graeme is succeeded as District President by Bob Timbs, who is already well-known to many across

the union after serving as South-West District Vice President based in the Illawarra.

Our Queensland District has seen the most significant changes, with several new officials elected to take up full-time roles. Heath Timmins from Moura Lodge has taken up the Senior Vice President role that was vacated by Mitch Hughes following his election to District President, while Jeff Pearce from Peak Downs and Brodie Bruncker from Broadmeadow have been elected as District Vice Presidents. I will miss Heath and Jeff's contribution on our Central Council but it is great to see them step into full-time union roles.

We are also farewelling our long-term Queensland District Vice President Steve Pierce, who has served the Union as an official for 24 years after a long career in the Central Queensland mining industry including leadership roles at our Saraji Lodge. We wish Steve all the best in his retirement.

In the South Western District, Mark Jenkins has been elected to take up the role of Vice President based in Lithgow. Mark has a wealth of experience throughout the mining and energy industry, starting his career at the Wallerawang power station and working as a contractor in the attached prep plant before moving to Springvale mine where he was a long-time leader in the Lodge and on the District Board of Management.

We have some new faces on our Central Council as well, having a constructive first meeting on 1 July.

In particular, we now have dedicated positions for two women on our Central Council to ensure the growing number of women in our industries and our union are represented. Welcome Clare Bailey from Mt Pleasant in NSW and Logan Muller from Moura.

Central Council is our Union's highest decision-making body and it's very encouraging to see members stepping up to represent mining and energy workers with pride and enthusiasm. Our Union prides itself on our democratic structures and values and we thank everyone who took the time to vote on your representation.

Notice to members of the Mining, Energy and Ports District of the Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy, Industrial Union of Employees, Queensland

The Mining and Energy Union Queensland District Branch (District) recently held an election for offices that correspond with offices of the Mining, Energy And Ports District of the Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy, Industrial Union of Employees, Queensland (Qld District).

The District is the federal counterpart body of the Qld District. To avoid holding two (2) elections for corresponding offices, the Union Secretary of the Construction, Forestry, Mining & Energy, Industrial Union of Employees, Queensland will, at the request of the Qld District Secretary, make an application for exemption from holding an election under section 802 of the Industrial Relations Act 2016 (Qld).

The application is being made so that the member who fills an office in the District will fill the corresponding office in the Qld District. The members of Qld District will not be detrimentally affected as members have already voted, or been given the opportunity to vote, in the election held for the federal counterpart body.

This notice will apply to any vacant offices in the Qld District until the expiry of the term which commences in 2024, where the office in which the vacancy occurs (in the Qld District) corresponds with an office in the District, and where the District has held an election for its vacant office.