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September 2024



CALLIDE MEMBERS HIT THE GRASS!

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**Mining &
Energy
Union**



CALLIDE MEMBERS DOWN TOOLS FOR A BETTER DEAL

Members at Batchfire's Callide mine are undertaking work stoppages and stopping coal loadings onto trains to secure permanent jobs, more training opportunities and better pay.

The protected industrial action follows a drawn-out bargaining period with minimal concessions from the company. Already, union members at Callide have undertaken shift length stoppages, and additional action remains ongoing.

Action was supported near-unanimously by Callide Valley Lodge members, with at least 98% of voters supporting all proposed measures in the protected action ballot.

Callide Valley Lodge Secretary Dave Wieden says this shows how united workers are in their demand for a fairer go.

"All of our members have lost at least one shift in the past week, which is money directly out of their pockets. However, we are resolved to continue taking action until Batchfire gets the message that we're serious about our claims."

Callide members are continuing to take targeted action into October including initiating common crib breaks and 1-12 hour stoppages, restricting the coal feed rate for the coal plant, and not loading trains on certain shifts. Additionally, they

are maintaining their voluntary overtime ban for the duration of the action period.

MEU members at Callide are seeking a better ratio of direct employees to labour hire in the mine's workforce, as well involvement in the recruiting process to ensure that new directly employed roles are filled by the labour hire contractors already working on site. Members also want to expand the Lodge's paid monthly meetings to include overtime for workers attending on their days off.

Additionally, members want increased transparency in training, as well as changes to make the training and upskilling process fairer. This includes the company covering the cost of all training, increasing wages of trainees, and separating training streams for production and engineering workers.

Dave said he hopes these changes will make a big difference in the career progression of his workmates.

"We've seen instances where Batchfire has hired multiskilled operators from outside the company rather than train the staff they already have who are dying to have a go. The only difference between a truck driver and a digger-driver is the opportunity to upskill."

Remuneration is also a key element of the Callide



workers' claims. Since Batchfire took over the site in 2016 pay has only gone up by 6%. With the inflationary pressures of the last several years and during a cost of living crisis, this means that Batchfire workers have seen their pay go backwards in real terms.

This is compounded by the fact that Callide is a largely residential mine, with approximately 80% of workers living in nearby Biloela or the greater Banana shire, meaning that local pay has a significant impact on the economic health of the community.

Callide Valley Lodge is seeking a pay increase to bring wages in line with the median in the Queensland coal industry, which will also flow onto

labour hire members on 1 November due to the Union's Same Job Same Pay win at the mine.

Workers are also seeking an increase in shift penalty rates, and the inclusion of production bonuses in the EA rather than at the discretion of management. These claims have been largely unaddressed by management, who have instead offered a small one-off payment and minor pay increases over the term of the new agreement.

"We've given Batchfire eight years to get established, but they're still crying poor." Dave said. "Our members just want a fair go this time around."

Protected industrial action will continue at Callide into October.



YALLOURN POWER STATION WORKERS TO BE BACKPAID SUPER AFTER UNDERPAYMENT REVEALED

Members at Victoria's Yallourn Power Station will be backpaid superannuation after the Fair Work Commission ruled in favour of the Mining and Energy Union application for members to receive their withheld payments.

Approximately 70 workers are affected, with the accumulated underpayments totalling approximately \$57,000.

Victorian District Secretary Mark Richards said that this was a long running dispute.

"Members were not receiving their correct superannuation payments all the way back to 2020.

"While it is disappointing that Energy Australia fought us every step of the way, we are extremely pleased that the Full Bench of the Fair Work Commission ruled in our favour.

"I have spoken to members who say they are very

relieved that this has now been resolved. At the end of the day, members just wanted to get what they were always entitled to."

The underpayments were uncovered after the Mining and Energy Union conducted an audit after a new payroll system was introduced in 2020.

Following the audit, the Mining and Energy Union lodged a case with the Fair Work Commission. Last month the Commission found in favour of the Union.

Historically, Energy Australia failed to make superannuation contributions to employees concerning the ordinary hours not worked by employees when they take time off in lieu for the payment of overtime.

Energy Australia have now committed to depositing the withheld payments, with interest, into members' superannuation accounts.





ANNE BAKER FOR BURDEKIN

MINING COMMUNITY MAYOR PUTS HAND UP FOR STATE PARLIAMENT

Can you tell us a bit about yourself, and your personal connection to the Mining and Energy Union?

My connection to the Mining and Energy Union goes all the way back to the 1980s. My late husband, Frank Baker was a coal miner and lifelong member, so I feel like I have been in the mining union family for a long time.

I have served the Isaac region in local government for the last seventeen years and for the last twelve years I served as mayor. I loved being a councillor and serving my local community. It has been a fantastic opportunity to represent people locally and to advocate for and lobby for critical infrastructure in the Isaac region.

When I was first elected mayor, we had around \$703,000 in mining royalties for our community. When I left that council, we had over \$400 million in contributions to local projects, so that was the difference between 2012 and 2024.

I think in the grand scheme of things, \$400 million is definitely not enough for everything the community needs, but it demonstrates the change we can achieve when we have good leadership and advocacy.

How did you make the decision to move from local government to state government?

When I decided not to contest my position in local government, I didn't have a concrete plan on what

I was going to do next. Frank had been unwell for a while at that point, and I wanted to prioritise quality time with him so that was one of the main considerations in not contesting my former position.

Another consideration when I stepped down was that I knew the time was right to bring through the younger generation to council leadership. I'm very proud that we had a smooth transition process.

While on council I had been working on big campaigns, including the Save Glenden campaign and the Sustainable Resources legislation. The plan was to then have a break, but then the opportunity to stand for Burdekin electorate came up and I decided that I would have a go.

I'm not a super political person, although I'm interested in politics. However, I'm more of a people person, but I thought if I can do this while continuing to put people over politics and be my authentic self, then I couldn't sit back and not have a go.

What feedback are you hearing from residents on the campaign trail?

There's a lot of discussion about mining royalties and the return of an equitable amount of royalties to regions where the value is produced.

Opposition Leader, David Crisafulli announced that the Liberal Nationals won't make changes to our new progressive royalties system but he didn't rule it out for a second term.

I think people are nervous that this still leaves the door open for the LNP to scrap the progressive royalties system down the track, which would be a significant setback for Queensland and places like Burdekin.

Royalties are instrumental in funding infrastructure projects and essential services that benefit mining communities. For example, increased coal royalties delivered \$48.5 million for a new Moranbah Hospital in the heart of Queensland's resources community. The hospital is currently under construction and is on track to open at the end of this year.

We have also announced a \$157 royalties funded election commitment for Peak Downs Highway and Dysart-Middlemount Road. This funding will be allocated to strengthening and widening both roads, as well as building overtaking lanes on Peak Downs.

Beyond that we're also hearing a mixed bag of

issues, such as cost of living and local issues.

Queensland Labor has been working hard to do what we can and assist where possible. The \$1,000 electricity credit and \$0.50 cent transport fares are some ways we are trying to ease things for households. If elected, we'll also establish 12 publicly-owned fuel stations and give people 20 per cent off their rego for 12 months.

In Burdekin, unfortunately some of the feedback I'm getting is that residents don't feel very represented on a grassroots level. If elected, I will work very hard to be a dedicated local representative.

Lastly, do you have a favourite food or coffee spot in the electorate?

There's probably more than one go-to, but I would probably say DalSanto's deli in Ayr. My order is a flat white with zymil milk and no sugar.





SAME JOB SAME PAY

SAME JOB SAME PAY'S BUMPER SEPTEMBER

The first pay rises from successful Same Job Same Pay applications kick in on 1 November. The MEU has been busy collecting evidence and putting in more applications.

United Wambo

On 13 September the MEU lodged a tranche of new applications covering dozens of labour hire workers at United Wambo, one of the Hunter's largest open cuts. The 120 workers are spread between four labour hire companies, each requiring an individual application.

The mine's operator, Glencore, contracts labour hire operators Workpac, Corestaff, Programmed Skilled Workforce and the TESA Group to perform the same work as direct employees, but for substantially less pay. While there is some variation between the labour hire provider and role, labour hire workers at Wambo are paid up to \$30,000 a year less than direct employees.

A successful application would lift the labour hire worker's pay in line with the Glencore EBA – in some cases a rise of over \$500 a week.

Mount Arthur

As BHP continues to drag their feet and delay our Same Job Same Pay case for their Bowen Basin mine sites, we have launched another application targeting their large Mount Arthur open cut mine in the Hunter Valley.

Approximately 225 labour hire workers are covered by the application, employed by Skilled Workforce Solutions to perform production roles alongside direct BHP workers.

Programmed workers are paid roughly \$40,000 a year less than their directly employed workmates. A successful application would lift their pay by over \$700 a week to the same rate as permanents. Stanmore Coal will not contest Poitrel application

The MEU received word last month that, based off the strength of our evidence, Stanmore will not stand in the way of our Same Job Same Pay application for Poitrel in the Fair Work Commission.

This will dramatically speed up our application, ensuring pay justice will arrive on site much sooner. Around 300 Workpac labour hire workers will have their wages increased to the EA level of direct employees.

Appin

The MEU is taking on the largest labour hire provider in the Illawarra, lodging a Same Job Same Pay application covering PIMs workers at Appin mine. About 240 workers are covered by the application. A successful application would raise their pay by about \$18,000 per year.

This marks our second Same Job Same Pay application in the Illawarra region, following Tahmoor underground mine in August.

THE AUSTRALIAN 

Labor approves three coalmine extensions in Hunter Valley

The Albanese government has announced it will approve extensions for three coal mines across the Hunter Valley and Gunnedah Basin in NSW. The extensions are expected to safeguard the jobs of over 1,800 workers, supporting communities largely dependent on the mining industry.

Environment Minister Tanya Plibersek approved Whitehaven Coal's planned Stage 3 Extension Project at Narrabri, extending underground mining operations from 2031 to 2044.

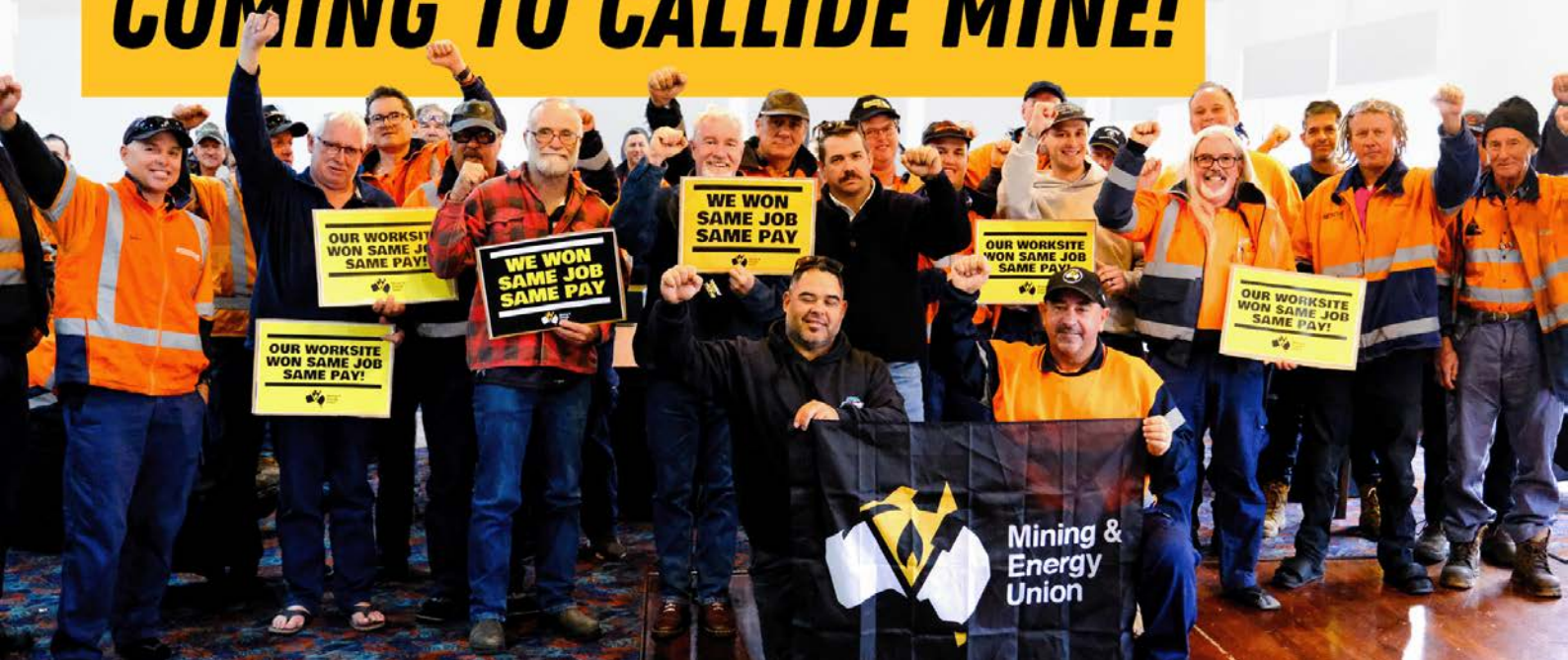
Mach Energy's Optimisation Project at Mount Pleasant mine near Muswellbrook was approved, significantly expanding future open cut thermal coal operations and increasing its annual coal extraction

up to 21 million tonnes per annum. Furthermore, the mine's operation was extended until 2048. The project will increase average operational workforce to 600 with a peak of 830 people.

Yancoal's Ravensworth mine, also near Muswellbrook, saw its operational lifespan extended from closure in 2025 to 2032.

The announcement was met by strong opposition from environmentalist groups, sparking protests that halted the operation of a coal train headed for the Port of Newcastle. Despite the opposition, Plibersek re-affirmed that the extensions are in line with existing climate laws.

**SAME JOB SAME PAY
COMING TO CALLIDE MINE!**



TRAGEDY STRIKES AT AUSTAR MINE



A worker was killed at the Yancoal's Austar mine in the NSW Hunter Valley on 17 September, while working to seal a disused mine shaft. Craig Hugo, 59, was part of a work group whose task was to replace existing steel plates covering the shaft with purposely manufactured steel covers when he fell into the shaft, falling 400 metres resulting in fatal injuries.

Austar underground mine was placed into care and maintenance in 2020 while transitioning to closure.

Northern Mining and NSW Energy District President Robin Williams said the Union's Industry Safety and Health Representative (Check Inspector) attended the scene of the tragedy and a thorough investigation is now being led by the NSW Resources Regulator.

"This fatality has sent shockwaves through the community. We extend our sincere condolences to Craig's friends, families and workmates and thank the first responders and emergency services who attended the scene."

The tragedy at Austar follows dual fatalities at Byerwen mine in Central Queensland in August. Chris Schloss was killed on 3 August while undertaking construction activities at Byerwen's camp, while John Linwood was killed when the light vehicle he was operating collided with a haul truck on 22 August.

After a string of fatalities in Queensland, it was reassuring to receive the news last month that labour hire company Mastermyne will be prosecuted over the death of coal miner Graham Dawson at Crinum underground mine in 2021.

This will be the first industrial manslaughter prosecution in Queensland mining since laws were extended to the industry in 2020.

Queensland District President Mitch Hughes said news of the prosecution would bring some relief to Graham Dawson's family and workmates.

"While nothing can make up for the tragic loss of Graham, it is a relief to know that those in charge of operations at Crinum will be held to account.

"In a period where we are seeing unacceptable rates of fatalities and serious injuries in the Queensland mining industry, workers and their families have been calling out for justice and for consequences when negligence kills or injures workers.

"We campaigned to see industrial manslaughter extended to cover the mining industry and we have also campaigned to see these laws used. Our industry needs accountability."



THE LIBERAL NATIONALS ARE COMING FOR YOUR PAY RISE

New Same Job Same Pay laws are set to deliver long-overdue pay increases to labour hire workers across Australia. However, the Liberal National Party (LNP) has made it clear that these gains are under threat if they come to power.

Opposition Leader Peter Dutton recently proclaimed to mining companies that he will be the 'best friend you've ever had'. Soon after, Shadow Finance Minister Jane Hume went on national television and said that the Liberal Nationals would 'review' Same Job Same Pay if elected.

We're not surprised that the Liberal Nationals are kowtowing to the mining lobby. After all, the Minerals Council haven't stopped bellyaching ever since new laws passed to close the loopholes allowing them to reduce their wages bill.

You don't need to be Sherlock Holmes to connect the dots. The Liberal Nationals have put workers' rights on the chopping block, and they've handed the axe to the Minerals Council with a red bow wrapped around the handle. Mind you, it's not just Same Job Same Pay they're coming for. The

Liberal Nationals are targeting other critical worker protections, including a fair definition of casual work, streamlined processes for casuals to convert to permanent jobs and limiting the use of rolling fixed-term contracts.

Prime Minister Albanese responded to the mining lobby with the very reasonable point that Australian mining companies don't need to cut wages or corners to be successful. After all, who wants to tell workers during a cost-of-living crisis that they shouldn't try to improve their wages? The Liberal Nationals and the Minerals Council apparently.

The reality is that the new laws are already making a difference for workers. For instance, Danielle, a truck driver at Mount Pleasant coal mine in the Hunter Valley, saw her pay rise by \$33,000 after Thiess opted to offer direct employment to labour hire workers from Programmed. This change was a direct result of the union's Same Job Same Pay application to the Fair Work Commission.

As these new laws settle in, even companies have come on board. Recently Boggabri Coal and

One Key announced that they would not contest the MEU application for Same Job Same Pay at Boggabri mine in the Gunnedah Basin. The was shortly followed by Stanmore and Workpac who also announced they would not contest our application for Same Job Same Pay at Poitrel mine in Central Queensland.

Even Qantas, one of the most notorious offenders of the labour hire loopholes said that they would support the Flight Attendants Association's application for Same Job Same Pay for short-haul cabin crews in the Fair Work Commission.

Qantas and BHP have been the biggest corporate drivers of this employment model in Australia. With Qantas accepting the jig is up, the mining lobby is the last holdout.

As for Tania Constable's statement that the new workplace reforms are bringing conflict to every workplace, this is simply not true. There are more workers reaching agreement with their employers through enterprise bargaining than before. Additionally, last month's figures from the Australia Bureau of Statistics shows employment figures have remained steady.

It is unfortunate that the Liberal Nationals are

insisting on bringing back a toxic and divisive model designed purely to circumvent enterprise agreements and cut wages.

The likes of BHP and Qantas have greatly benefitted from this model for years but the 'good times' of wage cutting, and labour hire loopholes has passed.

The overhead lights have come on, the last balloon bobbing in the ceiling corner has drifted to the floor and the host has gone to bed. The party is over.

Tony Maher, General President of the Mining and Energy Union



3 MUST KNOWS ABOUT SAME JOB SAME PAY



SAME JOB SAME PAY DOES NOT KICK IN AUTOMATICALLY

Same Job Same Pay must be applied for.

The MEU will apply to the Fair Work Commission for Same Job Same Pay on a site by site basis.

We intend to have many applications made and approved to deliver higher pay.

THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION SETS SAME JOB SAME PAY ORDERS

After an application is made, the Fair Work Commission can decide to make an order for a protected rate of pay.

This stops labour hire workers being paid lower than permanents for the same work.

PAY RISES WILL TAKE EFFECT FROM NOVEMBER 1 2024*

The MEU is currently making applications, with some orders already being issued.

We will prioritise applications for sites where we can make the strongest case and where MEU members get the most benefit.

*After November 1, applications for orders will come into effect from the date the order is made.

**JOIN
TODAY!**

