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April 2025



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Same Job Same Pay on the ballot paper

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese had a message for MEU mining and energy workers gathering in Cessnock last week: *“Same Job Same Pay is making a difference to workers and communities all over Australia ... on 3rd May its future is on the ballot paper.”*

This message was reinforced when Peter Dutton said he would not repeal Same Job Same Pay laws but would ‘change’ them. After fighting Same Job Same Pay laws from the start, we reckon the Coalition would ‘change’ them out of existence.

Addressing our Northern Mining and NSW Energy District AGM, PM Albanese acknowledged the MEU’s role championing Same Job Same Pay laws, which were delivered by the Labor Federal Government in December 2023. These laws have already delivered substantial pay rises for 1500 labour hire coal miners, with thousands more in the pipeline.

He met MEU members who have personally benefited from Same Job Same Pay including Khynea and Adam from Mt Pleasant mine, who



were converted from labour hire to permanent roles with a \$30,000 pay rise after the MEU’s Same Job Same Pay application last May; and Levi and Iain from BHP’s Mt Arthur mine, who have converted from labour hire to permanent roles with BHP following a Same Job Same Pay order this year. Iain was labour hire at Mt Arthur for 11 years after finally gaining permanent employment once the wage-cutting labour hire loophole was closed.

Same Job Same Pay is also driving change in industries from aviation to retail and meat processing.

This week, a new report from the McKell Institute shows that the impact of the laws on wage uplift and community benefit are greater than expected.

Same Job Same Pay on the ballot paper (continued)

Key findings of the report include:

- Same Job, Same Pay is projected to drive an annual wage uplift of up to \$920.3 million, with a potential to exceed \$1 billion.
- This wage uplift could deliver a broader economic contribution of up to \$2.5 billion annually.
- In sectors like mining, aviation, and retail, workers are already seeing life-changing pay increases of \$30,000–\$60,000 per year.
- Some companies are proactively shifting labour hire workers into direct employment to comply with the new laws, ending a decade of outsourcing.
- Labour force data shows no negative employment effects from the changes. Instead, it shows rising employment and tight labour markets.
- Broader economic benefits are compounding, particularly in regions dependent on mining and manufacturing.

The report highlights the experience in mining where over 1,500 workers have received average pay increases of \$33,500, with some seeing gains up to \$60,000. A further 4,300 mining workers stand to benefit from pending decisions, worth an additional \$200 million.

Prime Minister Albanese told MEU members the Labor Government was committed to lifting wages, reflected in growth in real wages five quarters in a row. He said “we know fair wages are not an obstacle to economic growth, they are fundamental to it.”

He contrasted Labor’s approach with the LNP, who have opposed tax cuts and promised cuts to services’ and workers rights.

MEU General President Tony Maher presented Prime Minister Albanese with a miners’ lamp, to acknowledge his introduction of the historic Same Job Same Pay reform.



BHP OS: All their Christmases at once



In a major union win, BHP has confirmed that all Operations Services employees will get Christmas and Boxing Day off.

Meanwhile, BHP is putting a new Enterprise Agreement for its production workforce out for a vote. While improvements have been made, the Agreement still falls short of MEU standards and the union is urging members to reject it.

BHP has told its workforce they would be guaranteed Christmas and Boxing Day off after the Federal Court agreed with the MEU that BHP has breached Award provisions for OS coal mine workers.

BHP's breaches of the Black Coal Mining Industry Award relate to:

- Not meeting the requirement to provide two public holidays each year that are not worked by the whole workforce (traditionally Christmas and Boxing Day)
- Requiring employees to work 12.5-hour shifts without agreement, when the Award requires employee agreement for shift lengths in excess of 10 hours.

BHP has filed an appeal to the decision.

OS workers are covered by the Award due to BHP's long-running failure to develop legally compliant Enterprise Agreements for its workforce.

This week, BHP announced plans to put a new OS Production Agreement out to vote from April 10-14.

Queensland District President Mitch Hughes said the company was seeking to buy a 'yes' vote with a substantial sign-on bonus.

He said that bargaining had delivered some good improvements, the agreement still falls short in key areas including:

- Work location and the ability for BHP OS to transfer workers to different sites and potentially different states, without access to redundancy payments.
- Wages – the proposed agreement operates on a 'minimum rates' rather than 'paid rates' basis, giving BHP discretion when setting workers' annual rates of pay. This leads to unfair outcomes and lack of transparency.
- Lack of enforceability of key conditions by having them covered by 'policies' rather than included in the Agreement.

BHP's proposed agreement puts the Christmas win at risk, said Mitch Hughes. "OS employees rostered on are entitled to have these Christmas and Boxing Day off and still be paid as if at work.

"BHP have made it clear that they are appealing and will revert back to their old practices if they win," said Mitch.

"The proposed agreement removes this entitlement and would enable BHP to continue its practice of operating every day of the year.

"While negotiations have taken a long time, BHP could have avoided this by simply employing people under the existing Agreements or listening to us over the last six years.

"Instead, they have continued with their arrogant approach, and we have proven them wrong at every step in different courts. **For pay, conditions and Christmas with your family - we encourage everyone to vote no to this proposed Agreement.**"



Baby on Board?



Planning or expecting a new baby in your family? It can be extra challenging to juggle new parenthood with shift work like mining. In this episode, we talk to operator Rebecca and MEU lawyer Eliza about your rights on parental leave, return to work and flexibility; how to stand up for them and where we need to improve.

Scan the QR code or subscribe by searching 'Mining and Energy' at Apple Podcasts or Spotify.

Same Job Same Pay update

Bengalla mine at Muswellbrook and Dendrobium mine in the Illawarra are the latest to win Same Job Same Pay orders.

For a full list of orders made and applications still before the Fair Work Commission, check our application tracker at:

meu.org.au/campaign/same-job-same-pay

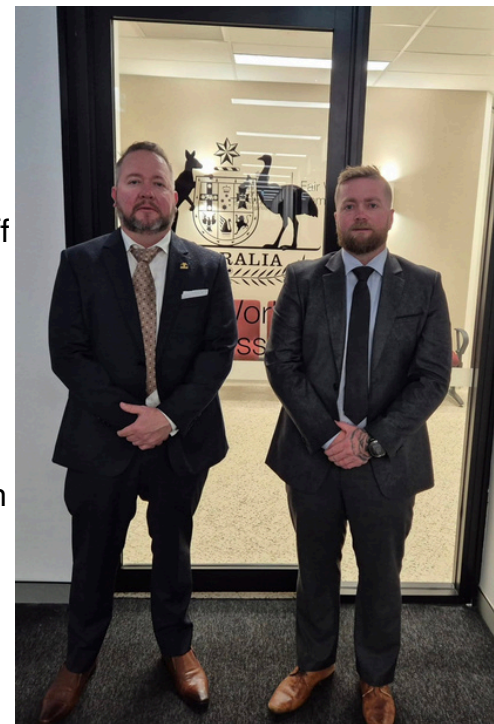
On 14 March, the Fair Work Commission issued orders covering CoreStaff and Skilled Programmed workers at New Hope's Bengalla mine. New Hope had thrown significant legal resources at challenging the MEU's application. These orders will lift the pay of about 110 labour hire workers at Bengalla in line with direct employees - a pay rise of between \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year.

The Bengalla win followed an order in late February at GM3's Dendrobium underground mine for Nexus workers, worth over \$1.6 million in total annual pay rises for about 90 workers.

The MEU has been successful in every Same Job Same Pay application that has been determined by the Fair Work Commission so far.

Although there are still multiple applications before the Commission, we are confident that as the issues are worked through, each of our applications will be successful.

We appreciate members' patience as these new laws are implemented.



Northern District VP Chad Hanson and Mt Thorley Warkworth Lodge President Matt Dodd recently attended the Fair Work Commission for a hearing into our SJSP application at MTW.

Tries, tackles and triumph at Coal Miners Cup

Over 300 kids from coal communities around New South Wales have gathered in Gunnedah this month for the Coal Miners Cup, an annual composite footy comp for small schools.

Running every year since 1998, the Cup is an opportunity for kids in small country schools that aren't able to field a full team to play competition footy.

Twenty teams participated in the 2025 Cup, coming from across the North West mining area including schools in Gunnedah, Boggabri, and Narrabri.

Started by Mining and Energy Union veteran and community activist Ross Whittaker, the emphasis of the day is getting stuck in, having a go, and enjoying yourself – not winning.

That's not to say the kids didn't leave it on the field. There were tries, tackles, and a few tears – a monumental effort for a group of kids who have mostly never played comp footy before.

This year's special guest was Wade Ryan, an Australian champion boxer, underground coal miner, and MEU member. Wade, a Gunnedah local who has fought internationally for WBC, IBF and WBO titles, was a participant in the first Coal Miners Cup in 1998, which he recalls fondly:

"The Coal Miners Cup had such a healthy attitude from the get-go. It was a massive early influence on my sense of good sportsmanship and perseverance."

The Cup is awarded to the best and fairest team on the day, with this year's taken home by Narrabri West. With each player coming away with a showbag, however, everyone felt like a winner.

As the Cup closes in on its thirty-year anniversary, and with a growing number of second-generation players coming through, it has truly been cemented as a fixture in the Gunnedah calendar.

The Coal Miners Cup has come to signify the strong community spirit of our mining communities, coming together to uplift local kids and give them a day that they'll never forget.

This point was not lost on Wade, who remarked: **"Days like today really show the strength of our community, but they are also a testament to people like Ross, who put their hands up to work day-in day-out for no personal benefit beyond giving back to the people around them."**

The Coal Miners Cup is proudly supported by the Mining and Energy Union, Unity Bank, and Team Super.



Tries, tackles and triumph at Coal Miners Cup (cont)



Winning in the Pilbara

In a huge month for West Australian mine workers, the MEU has secured important wins for workers across multiple pits and employers.

The MEU, along with our partners in the Western Mine Workers Alliance, have been rebuilding union power in the Pilbara after decades of aggressive deunionisation.

2025 is proving to be a milestone year in our efforts, with Rio Tinto and BHP realising they must act in response to workers becoming more organised.

More and more WA mine workers are standing together through the MEU and WMWA, our alliance with the AWU, to demand a stronger voice in the west coast mining industry.

Continued overleaf



Winning in the Pilbara (cont)

Paraburdoo majority support bargaining

Workers at Rio Tinto's Paraburdoo iron ore operations have decisively spoken up, with well over 400 signing the WMWA's majority support petition to initiate bargaining. This will be the first successful majority support petition in decades at a major Pilbara iron ore mine in decades.

Rio workers at Paraburdoo cited flight delays and extortionate utility bills in company-owned housing as particularly motivating their desire to bargain – concerns Rio Tinto are finding increasingly difficult to ignore. Unfair and uneven pay classifications are also a flashpoint – a consequence of the iron ore industry's reliance on individual contracts.

The petition has been submitted to the Fair Work Commission as part of an application for a Majority Support Determination. It is now up to the Commission to issue a determination, which would compel Rio to take part in collective bargaining.

National FIFO/ Training allowances increased

Train drivers at Rio Tinto in WA have made progress on a long-term claim to standardise the National FIFO entitlements for all Rio Tinto rail crew members. Rio Tinto previously dismissed this claim, which would fund the travel of FIFO train crew members who live interstate.

Flash forward to today, and Rio has just announced that they will fully fund national FIFO for up to 30% of their rail crew workers, proving once again how standing together through the Union gets outcomes.

Likewise, when the MEU bargaining team pushed Rio to increase the Training Allowance for On Job Trainers, Rio responded with a review. That review has clearly supported the claim, as Rio has also announced that the Training allowance has been increased from \$5600 to \$7500 annually – an overnight increase of 33%!

Flight delays now compensated

Rio Tinto has agreed to compensate FIFO workers who are delayed travelling home. This is great news for both production workers and rail crew.

The WMWA put to Rio that FIFO workers whose flights are delayed on the way home ought to be compensated \$100 per hour of delay.

In response to our claim and the strong show of support for union representation demonstrated in the Paraburdoo Majority Support Petition, Rio's new policy compensates workers for flights delayed over four hours with \$500, and over 12 hours with \$1000.

While Rio clearly intended to neutralise a hot-button issue, it has instead given workers confidence that they can achieve outcomes when they stand together.

We reckon flights are more likely to run on time when there's a financial penalty too!

\$10,500 retention bonus win

Finally, in the bargaining period for the current BHP rail crew agreement, the MEU secured a substantial retention bonus for all rail crew members.

BHP attempted to renege on this deal via a technicality, stating that Rail Academy Trainees were not entitled to the retention bonus because they had not yet been reclassified.

We challenged the company's interpretation of the condition, and after some time, BHP agreed to comply with the intention of the agreement. This has resulted in all BHP rail crew members, regardless of classification, being paid the \$10,500 bonus.



Hitting the road to save lives

Road accidents in Central Queensland's mining heartland are twice as likely to be fatal than the state average.

The MEU Queensland District is rolling out a Road Safety Roadshow with events across the Bowen Basin to raise awareness, change this tragic statistic and save lives.

The first event took place in Middlesmoot on February 28, followed by another in Dysart on March 8. Events have been well-attended, including presentations, Q&A sessions and open discussions for the community to provide feedback on the campaign. More events will follow soon.

The District is working with fatigue specialist Naomi Rogers-Woodhouse, who has studied the cause of many accidents in the region and is committed to working with the industry and the Union to reduce fatigue-related fatalities.

District Vice-President Heath Timmins said MEU is dedicated to advocating for critical improvements to roads and driving conditions in the Bowen Basin; ensuring mining companies comply with fatigue policies to protect worker safety; and raising awareness about safe driver behaviour.

The overall aim is to reduce the number of road accidents in coal regions and save lives.

"The safety of members, families and communities are a top priority for the union," Heath said.

"We urgently need safer roads and better infrastructure in our mining towns and on the roads which our members and their families regularly drive on.

"Unfortunately, the statistics show that road crashes in our state's mining heartland in Central Queensland are more than twice as deadly as the average fatality rate of road crashes across the state.

"We believe that work doesn't stop at the pit gate. Because the mine worker doesn't only need to come out of the mine, he or she needs to make it home safe as well. This campaign is an extension of our commitment to safety in all aspects."



Message from the General Secretary **One Nation doesn't care about mineworkers**



Opposition Leader Peter Dutton recently said voters should “look at what politicians do as much, or probably more, than what they say.” We agree.

One Nation's voting record on workers' rights is damning. Any mineworker thinking of backing them at the ballot box this federal election should take a close look at what they have done.

The most acute issue for mineworkers at this federal election is defending Same Job Same Pay which was introduced by the Albanese Government and is already working to end the labour hire rort.

Shamefully, One Nation have consistently used their position in Parliament to vote against laws that support permanent jobs and pay raises, including Same Job Same Pay for labour hire workers and stronger rights for casuals.

One Nation Senator Malcolm Roberts even went so far to call Same Job Same Pay a 'sham'. Senator Roberts and One Nation proclaim to be on the side of mineworkers, while voting against every legislative reform to support them.

Same Job Same Pay laws were introduced as part of Labor's Closing Loopholes legislation, which also contained critical worker protections including making it easier for casuals to become permanent, stronger delegates rights, better right of entry laws to stop wage theft, and ensuring workers don't go backwards during enterprise bargaining. **One Nation voted against it all.** The list goes on. They've voted against banning pay secrecy, the right to disconnect, making industrial manslaughter a criminal offence and rights for gig economy workers.

Perhaps most shamefully, in 2021 One Nation voted with the Morrison Government to remove court-recognised rights for casual coal miners in long-term, full-time roles to receive leave entitlements. This stopped class actions set to deliver millions in unpaid entitlements to labour hire coal miners.

Teaming up with the LNP to vote against pay rises and stronger rights for workers is at the heart of the One Nation playbook.

Earlier this month it was revealed that Australia's richest person Gina Rinehart hung a mural of herself and Peter Dutton at the Roy Hill mine site in Western Australia depicting her 70th birthday party.

Pauline Hanson featured in the mural among the cast of Gina's birthday revellers too. Earlier this year the pair were spotted having lunch in Thailand and you can be confident that the same anti-worker agenda was on the menu.

Mineworkers have made significant strides in campaigning for and winning fair wages for labour hire workers and securing more rights. However, these wins are new, and we can't afford to lose them now.

They say that when people show you who they are – believe them. One Nation has revealed themselves time and time again as anti-worker. If you value Same Job Same Pay or workers rights, don't risk One Nation.

Not convinced? Go to plsexplain.com.au to see a list of all the times One Nation voted against workers like you.

Grahame Kelly, General Secretary