

# Common Cause.

May 2025



United Wambo Lodge Members in Sydney fighting for Same Job Same Pay

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**Mining &  
Energy  
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# Same Job Same Pay comes to Glencore

**Bulga Open Cut has become the first Glencore mine to receive a Same Job Same Pay order from the Fair Work Commission. The pay rises will come into effect from 18 May.**

Glencore, the biggest mining employer in the Hunter Valley, has challenged the MEU's Same Job Same Pay applications at all its operations. Northern District Vice President Chad Hanson said that the first Glencore order at Bulga was enthusiastically welcomed by contractors at the site. About 150 employees of Workpac and Programmed are in line for pay rises around \$35,000 a year.

"It's also great news for contractors at Glencore's other operations in the Valley, giving them hope that orders at their sites won't be too far behind," said Chad.

Same Job Same Pay applications are still before the Fair Work Commission at Glencore sites Mt Owen/Glendell, United Wambo, Hunter Valley Operations, Ravensworth, and Mangoola.

United Wambo Lodge representatives, with Vice President Mick Taggart and District Legal Officer Stefan Mueller, were in Sydney this week for three days of hearings at the Fair Work Commission regarding their application.

Hearings are now complete and awaiting decision by the Fair Work Commission at all Glencore pits except for Hunter Valley Operations. At HVO, hearings this month did not finish within the two days allocated, with a further hearing date of 4 June listed. Overall, there are applications at 13 coal mines in NSW and Queensland still before the Fair Work Commission.

The re-election of the Albanese Labor Government means Same Job Same Pay laws are not at risk of being overturned and will continue to be rolled out across the industry.

The largest outstanding matter involves applications for the Queensland BHP sites of Peak Downs, Saraji, and Goonyella Riverside, which were challenged by BHP and heard in the Fair Work Commission in February.

This matter affects over 2000 labour hire workers across the three mines and is an important test case about the treatment of 'service contractors' and BHP's in-house labour company Operations Services.

Timing of the decision is in the hands of the Fair Work Commission and we are hopeful of a decision shortly.

## Same Job Same Pay Update

### ORDERS MADE AT:

Callide  
Mt Pleasant  
Rix's Creek  
Boggabri  
German Creek/Lake Lindsay  
Coppabella  
Poitrel  
Bengalla  
Mt Arthur  
Appin  
Dawson  
Bulga  
Mt Thorley Warkworth  
Dendrobium

### APPLICATIONS BEFORE THE FAIR WORK COMMISSION:

Peak Downs\*  
Saraji\*  
Goonyella Riverside\*  
Daunia  
Tahmoor  
Mt Owen/ Glendell\*  
United Wambo\*  
Hunter Valley Operations  
Mangoola\*  
Blackwater  
Maules Creek\*  
Ravensworth\*  
Caval Ridge  
Helensburgh  
Broadmeadow

\*Indicates hearings are complete and awaiting decision. Other sites have hearings on-going.



# Keeping Tassie miners safe



**The MEU is working to lift safety standards for our members and all mineworkers in Tasmania by strengthening mine safety laws.**

General Vice President Steve Smyth has been appointed to a steering committee tasked with reviewing and updating the mine safety regulations that support Tasmania's Mines Work Health and Safety Act.

Steve said that Tasmania has a diverse mining industry with a long history and a skilled, experienced workforce – but the state's distance from the mainland makes some bosses think they can get away with cutting corners.

"Just because Tassie has a smaller industry, doesn't mean their mines and quarries should have lower safety standards.



"We will certainly be pushing for standards and accountability to be raised because a miner's life and health in Tassie is just as valuable as anywhere else."

The steering committee has recommended a series of regulatory improvements from risk assessment and management, to training, ventilation and hazard management plans. Steve said the proposed improvements would move Tasmanian mine safety in the right direction and highlighted two critical areas from the MEU's perspective.

The first is to establish a statutory tripartite mine safety committee as present in NSW through the Mine Safety Advisory Committee (MSAC) and Queensland through the Coal Mining Safety and Health Advisory Committee. This ensures on-going engagement and scrutiny by unions, government and industry to continually improve safety standards.

The second is to develop a more comprehensive list of reportable high potential incidents to encourage a positive reporting culture in Tasmanian mines and quarries.

"In Tasmania, the employers want to limit the safety incidents they have to report on. But we should expand the list of proscribed events that mine and quarry operators have to report on to the regulator.

# Keeping Tassie miners safe cont'd

"This varies between sectors but can include events like high gas readings, strata failure, injuries or vehicle collisions.

"Events like these can be a symptom that safety systems have weaknesses, but if they are not reported these systemic issues can't be identified. We need to encourage employers to take pride in being transparent about safety."

Steve, as a former underground coal miner and ISHR, has also been asked by WorkSafe Tasmania to participate in safety inspections at Cornwall underground coal mine.

He said the Cornwall workforce is extremely experienced and knowledgeable about the local conditions, which are difficult compared to many larger mines on the mainland.

"It was very interesting to see the mine and the place change method they use. Our members at Cornwall are highly skilled and very resourceful in operating in the difficult conditions underground.

"There are some improvements that can be made in areas like ventilation and dust control, and I'll keep working with our members and the regulator to make sure the mine operates as safely as possible."





### Get the facts

on Queensland's most dangerous behaviours behind the wheel.

Remember the FATAL FIVE

#### DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING

##### DRINK DRIVING

More than **1 in 4** drivers and riders killed on Australian roads have a blood alcohol content exceeding the legal limit.



##### DRUG DRIVING

Drug use increases the risk of being involved in a crash, the risk is similar to driving with blood alcohol of **up to 0.15%**.



##### MEDICATION

Almost **1 in 4** Australian drivers ignore medication warning labels and continue to drive after taking prescription drugs. Some medications can impair your ability to drive.



#### SPEEDING

Speeds just **5km/h** over the speed limit in urban areas and **10km/h** in rural areas are enough to double the risk of a crash.



#### SEATBELTS

Unrestrained drivers and passengers are **8 times** more likely to be killed in a road crash.



#### DISTRACTION

Using a mobile phone while driving is highly distracting and increases your risk of a crash **four-fold**, even when using a hands-free kit.



#### FATIGUE

A driver who has been awake for 17 hours has a driving ability similar to a driver with blood alcohol concentration of **0.05**.



[www.police.qld.gov.au/initiatives/fatal-five-staying-safe-roads](http://www.police.qld.gov.au/initiatives/fatal-five-staying-safe-roads)



## Road safety: Beware the fatal five

It's National Road Safety Week and all MEU members are encouraged to reduce their risks on the road by remembering the 'fatal five': fatigue, speeding, drinking and drug driving, distraction and seatbelt use.

The Queensland District is campaigning to improve safety and reduce deaths on roads in mining regions. Each year, an average of 31 people are killed, and 462 severely injured, on Queensland roads - disproportionately in the regions. Stay safe!



# Overwhelming vote for independence

**Members of the CFMEU Manufacturing Division have voted overwhelmingly to withdraw from the amalgamated CFMEU and form their own standalone Union.**

91.6% of Manufacturing Division members voted to form an independent union known as the Timber, Furnishing and Textiles Union.

Independence will ensure the Union will be fully dedicated to the needs of its members and free from association with the CFMEU Construction Division which is in administration due to corruption and allegations of criminal activity.

The MEU has congratulated the Manufacturing Division on standing up for autonomy, self-determination and integrity in the face of significant challenges. We have long considered the Manufacturing Division to be a close friend in our movement, and we are looking forward to working collaboratively and in solidarity with the new TFTU.

Manufacturing Division National Secretary Michael O'Connor thanked the Mining and Energy Union for support during the demerger process:

“We appreciate the solidarity shown by the Mining and Energy Union during our campaign for independence.

“Even when things were at their most difficult, the MEU reliably supported us and gave Manufacturing Division members a positive example of independence.

“We look forward to our continued cooperation in delivering for working people as the Mining and Energy Union and the Timber, Furnishing and Textiles Union.”

The Manufacturing Division is now working through logistics of withdrawal including separation of assets from the CFMEU, before the new Timber, Furnishing and Textiles Union is registered.

# Final lap for bike ride honouring WA miners' union legend

A long-distance road cycle race in Western Australia sponsored by our Union for over 80 years has been held for the last time.

The 82<sup>nd</sup> Tom Lowry Memorial Race – named for a former miners' union leader - was held on 3 May. The race has been sponsored by the WA miners' union every year since 1942. The 102-kilometre bike road starts at the Collie Motorplex, which was built on the site of a disused underground mining complex.

This year, the winner was Hayden James who completed the course in two hours and six minutes.

Multiple factors caused organisers to decide this year's event would be the last, including lack of volunteers and cost and challenge of traffic management.

WA District President Greg Busson said it was sad the event was coming to an end, but the Mining and Energy Union has been extremely proud to sponsor and be associated with the event over eight decades.

"This has been a fantastic event, starting from the Collie coalfields and showcasing a beautiful part of the state. We thank all the organisers, participants and volunteers over many years who have made it such a success."

The event started the year after the death of Tom Lowry, who was a Collie coal miner and General Secretary of the Collie Miners Union from 1933 until his death in 1941. He represented the Miners' Union on the WA state executive.

In a tribute to Tom Lowry on his death, the ALP President of the time said: "Tom Lowry possessed a very kindly heart. His sole purpose in life had been the betterment of the living conditions of the people. He was a great secretary of the Collie Miners' Union, (and) a wonderful friend of the people of Collie."



## Late TOM LOWRY: Tributes at State Executive

Tributes to the late Tom Lowry, Miners' Union, and said that his were paid at the State Executive place would be difficult to fill—but his life was an inspiration to those meeting on Monday night by the general president of the A.L.P. (Mr. E. Needham, M.L.A.), and the State Premier (Mr. J. C. Willcock, M.L.A.). Mr. Needham said it was his sorrowful duty to deplore the loss of another Labor stalwart, Mr. Tom Lowry, general secretary of the Collie Miners' Union, president of the South-West District Council and delegate to the State Executive. Tom Lowry possessed a very kindly heart. His sole purpose in life had been the betterment of the living conditions of the people. He was a great secretary of the Collie Miners' Union, a wonderful friend of the people of Collie and a loyal, enthusiastic and staunch worker in Labor's cause. Their late comrade's interest in the work of the State Executive was indicated by his attendances at meetings: Tom Lowry never failed to attend when he was in the State, no matter how great the inconvenience. The general president then moved from the chair: "That it be placed on record the keen appreciation by the State Executive of Tom Lowry's work in the Labor Movement." Mr. Willcock, seconding the mo-



# Leadership message: Election result a win for workers' rights

**The election result on 3 May was a great win for workers' rights, preventing what we've won over the past three years being watered down or rolled back.**

Same Job Same Pay, improved rights for union delegates, and strong wage growth were all on the ballot this election and, to our relief, secured a resounding victory.

Anthony Albanese has become the first sitting Prime Minister to be re-elected since John Howard, and Labor is the first government to increase its majority on re-election ever.

Nationally, Labor reversed the gradual decline of their primary vote over the past two decades.

They were also two points ahead of the Coalition in primary votes, marking the first time since 2007 that more people have given their first preference to Labor than to the Coalition.

Likewise, 55% of Australians prefer a Labor government to the Coalition alternative. This means Labor has secured the highest two-party preferred vote of any government in Australian history since John Curtin in 1943. This trend also holds in seat allocation, as Labor has won at least 93 lower house seats, holding its strongest majority since the Second World War.

This election, the Mining and Energy Union ran a focused campaign targeting the mining heartland seats of Capricornia in Queensland, and Hunter, Paterson, Shortland, and Parkes in New South Wales. We supported candidates in these seats based on their connection to our Union and support for our members.

Targeting these seats where our members live and work allowed us to connect with mining and energy communities about the issues that matter to them, including Same Job Same Pay.

All five of the candidates we supported recorded a two-party preferred swing towards them.



In Hunter, MEU member and former coal miner Dan Repacholi has secured a massive 44.2% of the primary vote – more than the Nationals, One Nation, and Greens combined.

Dan has also secured a well-deserved promotion, becoming the first Special Envoy for Men's Health and we look forward to engaging with him to support our members' health and wellbeing.

We were offered a stark choice on May 3rd – between a sensible, progressive, and worker-focused government, and a divisive and distrusted opposition. The overwhelming result for Labor is a reaffirmation of the Australian values of justice, fairness, and equity, as well as for the work the Albanese government has put in to re-balance a system that has been tilted in favour of employers for too long.

Now it is up to us to continue to push for reform and to use the new powers at our disposal to deliver for our workmates, our families, and our communities.

**Grahame Kelly,  
General Secretary**