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**2025 YEAR IN  
REVIEW**







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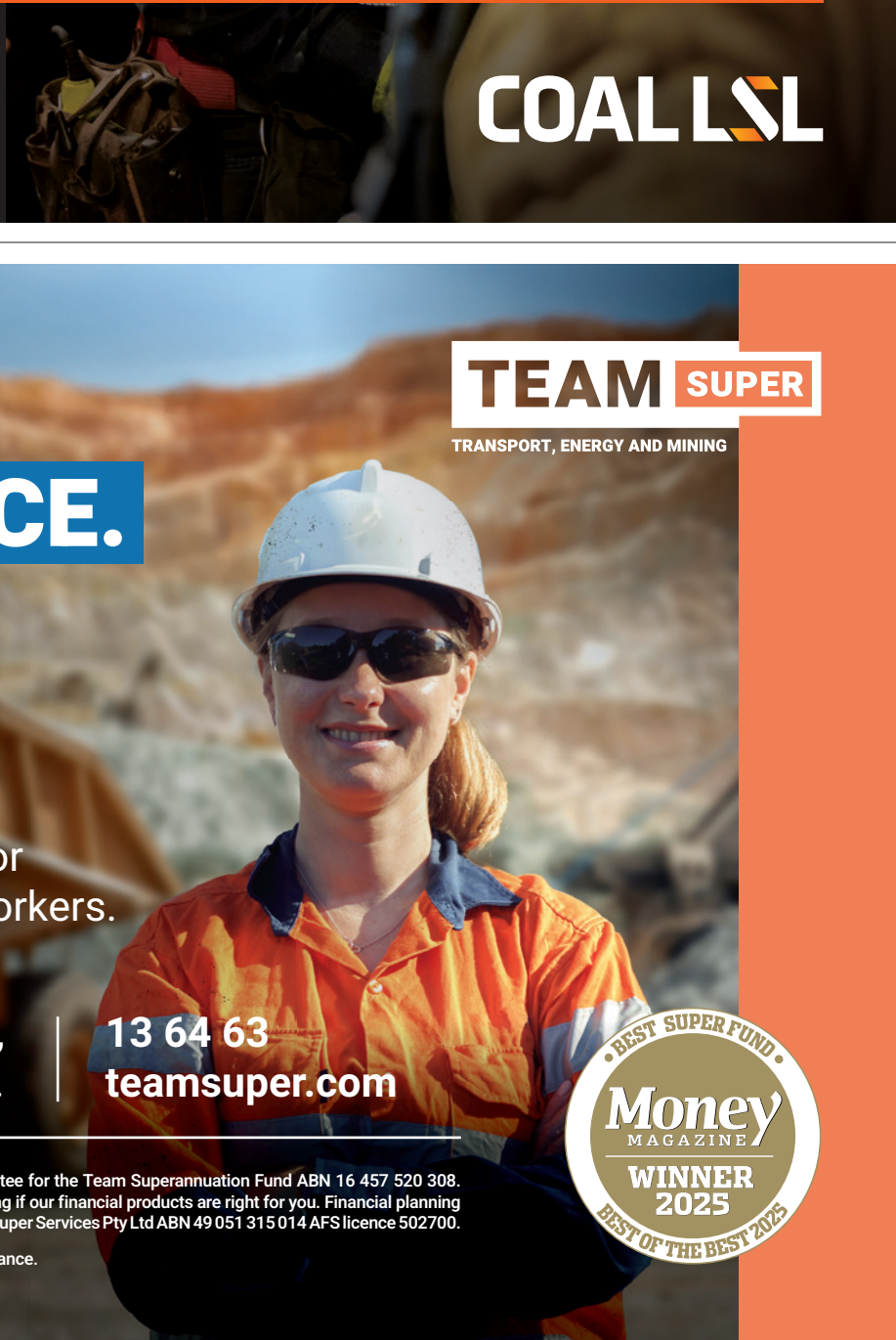
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# 2025 – A YEAR OF SUCCESS

**As 2025 ends, we must reflect on a year of action, growth, and achievement for the Mining and Energy Union. Together we have grown our membership, boosted our capacity, and secured better pay and conditions for thousands of mineworkers nationwide.**

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the almost 3,000 workers who have joined the MEU in 2025, recognising that the best way to improve their pay and conditions is to stand together through their Union. This growth, of over 10% annually, is unprecedented and reflects the dedication of our members and activists to securing a better deal for themselves, their workmates, and their communities.

A major accomplishment was delivering Same Job Same Pay at 26 mines across NSW and Queensland, winning \$150 million annually in pay rises and doing serious damage to the labour hire rort. Despite costly attempts from the employers to block and delay these wins, the MEU has largely been successful in pursuing pay justice for labour hire workers, underscoring the power of unity and persistence.

We also defended new delegates' rights laws, ensuring workplace delegates can represent all workers, not just those employed by the same entity. These reforms, alongside Same Job Same Pay, were fiercely contested during the May Federal Election. A Coalition victory threatened to undo these wins, but the union movement rallied and helped bed down these major workplace improvements.

Across the country, MEU lodges fought hard for fair agreements. Members at Helensburgh, Rix's Creek, and Ulan took industrial action, enduring lockouts and pickets to secure improved deals. Ulan workers even triggered arbitration under the new Intractable Bargaining clause - a testament to their solidarity and resolve.

However, challenges in our industry remain. Corporate mismanagement has led to suspensions of work at Liberty Bell Bay and Tahmoor, leaving workers in limbo. We will continue to advocate for swift sales of these assets and stand with affected families during this uncertain time.

In the energy sector, progress came through the Net Zero Economy Authority, tasked with redeploying workers from closing power stations and captured coal mines. The MEU

has worked closely with the NZEA to secure support for workers at Eraring and Yallourn, which are the next two power stations scheduled for closure. MEU energy delegates took their message directly to Industry Minister Tim Ayres and NZEA leaders, making the case for meaningful support for workers and regions affected by closures.

Finally, we must acknowledge Tony Maher, who is retiring after 27 years as General President of the MEU. Tony's leadership through tough times has been exemplary. He will continue to serve on the NZEA Board and as the Chair of Safe Work Australia. In 2026, I will be stepping up to take over the role of General President, a daunting and exhilarating prospect. Tony's dedication, integrity and wisdom will guide me in this new role, and I am deeply grateful for the mentoring he has provided over our years of working together.

To all members: thank you for your strength and solidarity in 2025. We wish you and your loved ones a safe and happy 2026.

**Grahame Kelly**  
General President  
Mining and Energy Union



# TRAGEDY STRIKES QUICKLY – SAFETY REFORM IS SLOW AND STEADY

**2025 was a year of significant progress for our Union – but it was also a stark reminder of the dangers faced by mining and energy workers here in Australia and around the world.**

The year was punctuated by distressing events. In March, an underground explosion at Moranbah North coal mine in Queensland shook our industry. In October, tragedy struck at Cobar, where two workers were killed and another seriously injured in an explosion at the Endeavour underground silver and zinc mine. And just two days into the new year, a miner lost his life in a roof fall at Mammoth underground coal mine. We also saw near misses in our power stations that could have ended in disaster.

In our industries, disasters happen in an instant. Roof falls, explosions, fires, and equipment failures occur suddenly – and lives can change forever in a heartbeat.

By contrast, safety reform is painstakingly slow. Improving legislation and regulation requires thorough investigation, evidence gathering, and relentless advocacy. It means working constructively with employers and governments – some of whom have mixed records on worker safety – to secure meaningful change.

Winning safety improvements also demands constant vigilance at the workplace level. A strong union presence with empowered members is critical to resisting sliding standards and the pressure to prioritise productivity over safety.

In 2025, I've been privileged to witness the tireless work that goes into lifting safety standards. It has been very satisfying working in Tasmania at the District and state level to raise standards, after all, workers' lives at small sites in small states are just as important.

I've also been very impressed by the exceptional response of our Queensland District and Moranbah North Lodge after the March explosion, in working towards re-entry of the mine and looking after the traumatised workforce with real care. The on-going safety activism of the MEU meant that Moranbah North operator Anglo saw the benefit in working with us rather than needless conflict.

Equally inspiring is the courage of workers who step up in emergencies to rescue and recover their mates. These acts of bravery remind us why safety must never be compromised.

Our union's work has been instrumental in driving reforms and holding companies accountable. But the fight is far from over. In 2026, we will continue the steady work of push for stronger protections so that every worker can return home safely at the end of their shift.

**Stephen Smyth**  
General Vice President







# RIX'S CREEK: SEVEN WEEKS ON THE LINE THAT HELD

**2025 saw workers at Rix's Creek Mine in the NSW Hunter Valley take part in one of the longest and most determined mining strikes in the region in decades. What began as a stalled enterprise bargaining process became a sustained industrial campaign that tested resolve, drew wide community attention, and ultimately forced a breakthrough.**

**Bargaining for a new enterprise agreement had been underway for months, with workers increasingly frustrated at proposals from the Bloomfield Group that failed to meet their expectations. Members voted to take protected action and go on strike.**

As members notified of their strike action, Bloomfield Group responded by putting an agreement out to vote anyway. The agreement that went to vote represented a backwards slide from where things had been up to in the stalled negotiations, angering members.

The result of the ballot was decisive, with more than 92 per cent voting no. For members, the message was simple. They were prepared to keep negotiating, but not to accept this backwards deal that did not meet their expectations on pay, nor repair accident pay provisions that would leave injured workers with less than if they had been on shift. A shortfall that had previously been topped up by colleagues themselves, passing the hat around.

Bloomfield's operational response to the long strike action was to train managers to operate heavy machinery, and to seek strikebreakers from the community. A move that further deepened members' resolve.

Throughout the strike, workers maintained a constant presence on the picket line. The dispute quickly became highly visible, not just locally but nationally. Social media played a central role, with members and supporters sharing updates from the line, amplifying the

workers' case and applying public pressure on Bloomfield to improve their offer. Photos, videos and personal stories circulated widely, ensuring the dispute could not be quietly ignored.

Support flowed in from across the union movement and the community. Other MEU lodges, local residents and supporters dropped by the picket line, donated food and supplies, and shared messages of solidarity. For many members, that support helped sustain morale through weeks without pay and reinforced their resolve to continue to pursue a fair outcome.

The length of the strike underlined the seriousness of the dispute. Workers did not take the action lightly. Standing out for seven weeks meant real financial strain and uncertainty. But members remained united, holding firm in the belief that conceding would set a damaging precedent not just at Rix's Creek, but across the industry.

After seven weeks, and many meetings in between, Bloomfield returned with an improved offer. The eventual agreement delivered significant gains, including strengthened accident pay provisions and a substantial wage increase across the life of the deal.

For the workforce, the outcome was hard-won and deeply felt. It was proof that collective action still works, and that even long, difficult disputes can deliver results when workers stand together.

The dispute also marked a defining moment

for a new generation of members. Many workers experienced their first extended strike, learning first-hand what solidarity looks like in practice. The campaign showed how traditional industrial action, combined with modern tools like social media, can shift the balance in bargaining.

Rix's Creek will be remembered as one of the defining disputes of 2025. Not just for its length, but for the discipline, unity and determination shown by workers who refused to back down. It stands as a reminder that when workers organise, support each other, and hold the line, they can win.







# TWO BIG WINS AT HELENSBURGH: PAY RISES LOCKED IN, JOB SECURITY REINFORCED

**After a six-week dispute on the gate and five years in the courts, MEU members at Peabody's Metropolitan mine have won a double victory - securing real pay increases and a landmark High Court ruling that strengthens job security across the industry.**

**In August, striking Helensburgh miners voted up a new enterprise agreement that delivers significant pay increases and defends core job-security protections - ending a tough six-week dispute.**

Negotiations broke down in June when Peabody locked MEU members out for three weeks in retaliation for one-hour stoppages. Members responded with rolling strike action and a determined picket at the mine entrance. Unity held, an in-principle deal was reached, and members endorsed the agreement by a strong majority.

South West District Vice President Mark Jenkins said the result shows what happens when workers stand together:

"Peabody leant hard on the MEU members at Metropolitan, but they stood firm to win this new agreement. Peabody's lockout was disgraceful, but it only strengthened the resolve of the miners. The best - and only - way to stand up to the hardball tactics of mining multinationals is to stand together through our union."

Helensburgh site delegate Matt Potter said members made sacrifices to defend a principle:

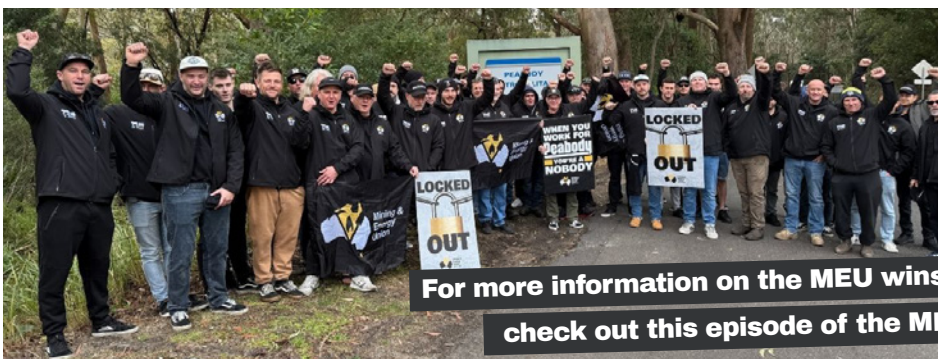
"Being locked out and then on strike put real financial strain on many of our members, but now was the time to stand up for job security in the coal industry. I'm immensely proud of the unity and strength of the

Helensburgh lodge and how we stood up for our rights and conditions."

On the legal front, the High Court of Australia has confirmed that the sacking of twenty-two underground miners in 2020 was not a case of genuine redundancy. The Court upheld the Fair Work Commission's findings that those workers could have been reasonably redeployed to similar roles being performed by contractors Mentser and Nexus. Peabody has now failed three times to overturn that ruling.

This decision sets an important precedent for job security in the mining industry. The High Court has been clear: permanent workers cannot be removed in favour of contractors through dodgy corporate restructuring.

These wins rebut a tired corporate playbook: starve wages, casualise core work, and cry "redundancy" while the same tasks are outsourced. Helensburgh miners have shown there's another way - stand together, hold the line, and insist on secure jobs with fair pay.



**For more information on the MEU wins at Helensburgh, check out this episode of the MEU podcast:**





# NARRABRI MINERS BEAT 7/7 ROSTER IN NEW DEAL



**Narrabri Underground coal miners successfully defended their preferred roster pattern in their 2025 Enterprise Agreement, defeating an attempt by Whitehaven to impose 7/7 rosters.**

The EA, which also included a strong pay increase and improved entitlements, was a big win for the workforce, many of whom live in Narrabri and Gunnedah.

Narrabri Underground Lodge President Ben Manchee said local Whitehaven management had done the right thing by hiring locally, but there was a long-term push from the board to introduce the longer roster pattern in line with other operations.

"We're a local pit," said Ben. "Our guys live here, play footy here, raise families here. A 7/7 roster just doesn't work for our community."

The pushback against the proposed 7/7 roster was overwhelming. In a decisive vote, 125 out of 130 employees voted 'no' to Whitehaven's first offer proposing the change, with just three in favour. "That was a really good result for us," Manchee said. "It showed the company just how united we were."

The final vote on the agreement saw 103 in favour and 32 against—a stark contrast to a narrow result for the 2022 EA that was voted up with a majority of just four votes. "It's a good deal after a period of not making a lot of progress in bargaining," said Ben. "The majority understood that."



## ULAN UNDERGROUND MINERS FIGHT FOR PAY JUSTICE

**Ulan underground miners fought hard for pay justice in 2025 – building on a fierce industrial campaign by accessing new laws to help break a bargaining impasse.**

**Bargaining at Glencore's Ulan Underground mine, near Mudgee in the Central West of NSW, dominated much of 2025 for those working at the pit.**

Workers at Ulan Underground had already been engaged in bargaining with the recalcitrant Glencore for nearly a year at the start of 2025 with little to show for it.

With their 2021 agreement expired and no pay rise since March 2023, members repeatedly rejected employer proposals that failed to close a significant gap in wages (nearly 12%) compared with Glencore's neighbouring operations at Ulan West.

The Mining and Energy Union and the broader Mudgee community supported members through strike actions, lockouts and repeated attempts to get Glencore to behave reasonably.

Despite these efforts, progress remained minimal, and negotiations entered an impasse.

In December 2025, under the reformed intractable bargaining framework introduced in 2023, the Fair Work Commission, following an application from the MEU, declared bargaining at Ulan Underground intractable, recognising that the extended standstill and lack of meaningful movement had left workers without a realistic pathway to resolution.

This declaration triggered a 21-day post-declaration negotiating period, with the Commission signalling that if genuine progress is still not made following that window, a workplace determination (arbitrated agreement) may be the next step.

For Ulan workers this decision marked a critical moment in a long and frustrating battle with Glencore. The declaration acknowledged the prolonged bargaining impasse, validated members' concerns about fairness and comparability, and opened an alternative path toward a binding, arbitrated outcome decided by the Fair Work Commission if the parties still cannot agree.

While Glencore has lodged an appeal, the union remains confident in the strength of the Commission's decision. Members remain committed to achieving a fair and comparable agreement in 2026 and will continue to pursue all available avenues to bring this matter to a just and timely resolution.



# STANDING UP FOR PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Last year, the Mining and Energy Union secured an important Federal Court win that drew a clear line around workers' rights on public holidays.

BHP Operation Services was found to have broken the law by directing workers to work on Christmas Day and Boxing Day, rather than asking them. Evidence before the Court showed that workers were selected to work those public holidays by having their names pulled out of a hat.

The Court found that this approach breached the Fair Work Act. Under the National Employment Standards, employers must request that a worker perform public holiday work. Workers have the right to refuse on reasonable grounds. Being told you are working, or being randomly selected to fill a shift, is not lawful.

As a result, the affected workers are in the process of being compensated, and BHP was fined, delivering a tangible result for workers who were forced to give up protected days without being given a lawful choice.

The decision sends a clear message that employers cannot sidestep public holiday protections through labour hire arrangements or rostering practices. Public holidays cannot be treated as just another day.

This case was part of the Union's broader work in 2025 to enforce basic rights where they are tested or ignored. When employers overstep, the MEU acts to protect workers' time, dignity, and lawful entitlements.

## So, can your employer make you work on a public holiday?

### In short:

- They can request, not command (this is what the MEU's win clarified)
- You can refuse on reasonable grounds
- They can only insist if your refusal itself isn't reasonable
- If there was a dispute, the Fair Work Commission would decide what's reasonable in the circumstances.

## If you're ever unsure, talk to your delegate or the union before responding.

**Remember: the National Employment Standards are just the baseline. Some EBAs include clearer or stronger rules around public holiday work so be sure to check your agreement as well.**



## CAUGHT BETWEEN MISMANAGEMENT AND UNCERTAINTY

Sanjeev Gupta is a British-based billionaire whose GFG Alliance controls a number of major mining and manufacturing operations in Australia. Throughout 2025, ongoing financial instability within Gupta's global empire left workers across multiple sites dealing with prolonged uncertainty as decisions made at the corporate level repeatedly translated into disruption, stand-downs and anxiety for workers and their families.

Tahmoor Colliery in NSW became one of the clearest examples. Once a stable producer of high-quality coking coal and a major employer in the region, the mine has been effectively mothballed since February. While the operation itself remained viable, Gupta redirected Tahmoor's working capital to support his Whyalla steel-works in South direct employees and contractors stood down with little clarity about their future.

As the year dragged on, uncertainty deepened at Tahmoor. Questions around wage payments, unpaid NSW coal royalties and outstanding debts remained unresolved. Contractors, including labour hire workers, were left unpaid, reinforcing the sense that workers were being asked to absorb the cost of financial decisions and irresponsible management.

The experience at Tahmoor was not isolated. At Liberty Bell Bay in Tasmania, workers also faced extended uncertainty after operations were scaled back under Gupta's ownership. The Mining and Energy Union was forced to pursue action in the Fair Work Commission to secure basic clarity around restart timelines, transparency and job security for members.

Across Gupta-controlled sites, workers waited for answers while financial arrangements shifted above them. Throughout the year, workers were repeatedly told progress was close, even as delays continued and confidence eroded. In December, a deed of company arrangement returned control of Tahmoor to Gupta-related entities, leaving many workers deeply disappointed that their futures remained tied to further promises rather than certainty.

These events underscored a simple truth. Immense wealth and complex corporate structures offer little comfort to workers when accountability is absent. The Mining and Energy Union will continue to fight for transparency, responsible ownership and secure jobs at Tahmoor, Liberty Bell Bay and across the sector in 2026.



# \$150 MILLION IN SAME JOB SAME PAY WINS



**2025 was a landmark year for closing the labour hire loophole. The Mining and Energy Union used Same Job Same Pay laws to deliver massive pay rises and permanent jobs for labour hire mine workers, their families, and communities.**

Across Australia, MEU members celebrated historic wins as the Union continued to lodge applications and secure orders. While some battles remain, here's how 2025 unfolded:

## January

Just 20 days into the year, the Fair Work Commission issued orders at Rix's Creek (NSW Hunter Valley). Despite legal challenges, labour hire workers won pay rises of around \$40,000 a year.

## February

At BHP Mt Arthur, workers secured \$10 million in pay rises—the first Same Job Same Pay win at a BHP site—leading to many conversions to permanent jobs. Orders at Dendrobium Mine (Illawarra) delivered \$1.6 million more.

## March

Workers at Bengalla Mine received increases of \$30,000–\$50,000 annually, and 170 workers at Appin Mine gained significant rises after MEU forced employer compliance.

## April

Almost \$3 million in pay rises at Mt Thorley Warkworth, with 70 workers better off by \$40,000 a year. Another 100 workers at Dawson Mine (QLD) won up to \$25,000 annually.

## May

Workers helped keep Same Job Same Pay laws intact by voting out the Coalition. MEU also secured its first win against Glencore, delivering \$5 million at Bulga Open Cut, plus increases for 130 workers at Helensburgh.

## June

Over 150 workers at Maules Creek (Gunnedah Basin) gained rises of \$30,000 annually.

## July

Orders at Daunia and Blackwater (QLD) left 120 workers \$15,000 better off. At United Wambo, 150 workers gained \$35,000, and 80 workers at Mangoola Mine scored \$50,000 increases.

## August

Another big win at Muswellbrook Open Cut, with annual increases up to \$40,000, despite Glencore's legal resistance.

## September

Same Job Same Pay Day at BHP saw 1,800 workers finally receive fair pay after Federal Court rejected BHP's delay tactics. Additional orders at Caval Ridge, Mt Owen/Glendell, and Ravensworth followed.

## November–December

Despite ongoing appeals, MEU continued to win. The year ended with an application at Vickery Mine.

**By year's end, MEU had secured orders at 28 coal mines, worth \$150 million in annual pay rises. Labour hire workers nationwide are now tens of thousands better off — and in 2026, MEU will keep fighting for fair pay.**







## ENERGY DELEGATES FIGHT FOR A FAIR FUTURE

**Energy delegates from across Australia met in Sydney in August for a two-day meeting on the shared challenges facing our industry and the actions needed to deliver the best outcomes for MEU members and their communities.**

**This marked the first national meeting of energy industry workers since the establishment of the Net Zero Economy Authority, long advocated for by our union.**

With workers from Collie, Latrobe Valley, Central Queensland, Lithgow and the Hunter Valley represented, there were varied experiences and common themes.

In Collie, the WA Government has invested heavily in worker support schemes and backing for new industries – setting the gold standard for a just transition in the Australian energy sector.

Conversely, MEU members in the Latrobe Valley expressed dismay at lack of support by the Victorian Government for numerous projects proposed for the region, raising fears for the future of the region after further power station closures.

Queensland delegates are grappling with having commitments to worker transition support ripped up by the new Crisafulli LNP Government; while in NSW, delegates from Eraring Power Station and Myuna coal mine are the first to engage formally with the NZEA about establishing an Energy Industry Jobs Plan to support workers affected by Eraring's closure, scheduled for 2027.

Delegates from the Lithgow area raised valid and deeply held concerns about the allocation of supports to region, and its exclusion from being a NZEA focus region. They were able to express these concerns directly with the CEO, David Shankey, and the MEU is committed to continuing to advocate for targeted supports for the Lithgow region.

Subsequent to the delegates' meeting, Professor Roy Green, who was conducting a review of NZEA legislation, visited Lithgow where MEU representatives gave him a tour of potential sites for new industry growth.

General Secretary Grahame Kelly said that with rapid change occurring in the energy industry – including closures at Eraring and Yallourn power stations by 2028 – the MEU would continue to foster engagement between sites and Districts; and would use all avenues to secure improved outcomes including backing new industries and technologies; getting better conditions in Enterprise Agreements and working with state and federal governments to maximise support for workers.



## CALLIDE COPS \$9 MILLION FINE AS YALLOURN HAS A SAFETY WAKE-UP CALL

**2025 put the spotlight on safety at power stations, with MEU members raising concerns about lack of adequate maintenance.**

The long-running fallout from the explosion at Callide C in May 2021 continued last year, with the Federal Court in February ordering a fine of \$9 million for breaches of the National Electricity Rules.

The Australian Energy Regulator brought the proceedings against Callide Power Trading Pty Ltd, an entity that is owned in equal shares by InterGen and the Queensland Government's CS Energy. The company admitted in court that it had failed to ensure the Callide C4 generating unit met performance standards, and had failed to plan, design, and operate facilities in compliance with performance standards, in breach of the National Electricity Rules.

The fine of \$9 million, just shy of the maximum \$10 million penalty, is the highest ever imposed for a breach of performance standards under the rules.

MEU members had been raising the alarm about poor maintenance and neglect at Callide for years, concerned that the company was not investing in the safe operation of the plant ahead of its impending closure in 2028. These concerns were vindicated by long-delayed reports that finally lifted the lid on the situation at the site.

Last year's Brady Report highlighted that the 'key organisational factor' causing the incident was the lack of implementation of effective process safety practices – the report said the company failed to value process safety practices, placing them in tension with cost-cutting.

Queensland District President Mitch Hughes welcomed news of the fine, saying: "It is deeply disappointing that a lack of maintenance and oversight led to this preventable disaster which risked the lives of workers. We hope the judgement sends a strong message to all companies in the industry."

There was also a significant safety incident at Yallourn Power Station in June, with a large air duct collapsing onto the floor of the power station in an area frequented by operators.

Victorian District President Andy Smith said the incident at Yallourn should serve as a wake-up call to improve safety at our power stations:

"Workers have had very serious worries about the safety of the plant and equipment at Yallourn for quite some time.

"For as long as coal plays a role in underpinning Victoria's energy security, private operators must be required to undertake necessary upkeep to ensure worker safety.





Eraring mass meeting to discuss NZEA



Joseph Price and Scott King  
meet Industry Minister Tim Ayres

## SUPPORT NEEDED FOR ERARING CLOSURE

**In 2025, MEU members made a strong case for co-ordinated support for workers facing upheaval when Eraring power station closes.**

**Power station operator Scott King and Myuna coal miner Joseph Price travelled to Canberra to talk to Ministers about why it's so important that the NZEA implements an Energy Industry Jobs Plan (EIJP) at Eraring.**

Scott and Joseph met Industry and Science Minister Tim Ayres to express their concerns for the future and hopes that the NZEA will deliver on its commitment to support workers directly affected by the energy transition. The MEU and other unions made a submission to the NZEA, making the case for an EIJP to support the thousands of workers facing displacement from the station's scheduled closure in August 2027, with a possible extension to 2029.

Unions argued that the closure of Eraring alongside its wholly dependent coal supplier, Myuna Colliery, will have far-reaching impacts on workers, families, and the regional economy. Myuna, operated by Centennial Coal, lacks infrastructure to supply coal elsewhere, making its future entirely tied to Eraring.

The unions urged the NZEA to apply to the Fair Work Commission for a Community of Interest Determination, the critical first step toward establishing an EIJP. This plan would place enforceable obligations on Origin Energy, Centennial, and all contractors and supply chain employers to provide transition support—including training, career and fi-

nancial advice, and paid time to access these supports.

An EIJP would close serious gaps in support, promote best practice standards, and coordinate a smooth transition. It would also enable the NZEA to attract receiving employers, map skillsets, and facilitate redeployment into secure, well-paid jobs—especially important given the region's reliance on coal and the limited transferability of skills.

The Net Zero Economy Authority was due to make a decision in early 2026 about applying for a Community of Interest at Eraring. At the end of 2025, consultations also began for a Community of Interest for Yallourn Power Station.

## NZEA VISITS ENERGY REGIONS

**Net Zero Economy Authority staff travelled extensively throughout energy regions in 2025, including meeting with MEU members and officials.**

Industry expert Professor Roy Green, who conducted a review of NZEA legislation for the Federal Government, visited Lithgow in October, where MEU delegates from local coal mines and Mt Piper Power Station gave him a tour of potential sites for new industry growth.

Lithgow is heavily reliant on coal mining and energy jobs and facing economic decline from previous closures.

Professor Green and the team heard the MEU's ideas for supporting affected workers and joined us for a tour looking at existing and potential future industrial sites in and around Lithgow.

South Western District VP Mark Jenkins, ISHR Todd Jones and Mt Piper Delegate and Central Councillor Peter Compton shared their deep local knowledge and hopes for Lithgow's future.



**The MEU is fighting for a fair go for all mining and energy regions.**



# HITTING THE ROAD FOR SAFETY

**The Mining and Energy Union Queensland District has been tackling the issue of vehicular fatalities in our mining regions, leading a road safety campaign throughout the state to highlight the perilous conditions of our roads and encourage safer driving.**

**Each year, an average of 31 people are killed, and 462 severely injured, on Queensland roads- with these incidents disproportionately occurring in the regions.**

The road safety roadshow travelled throughout mining communities last year to discuss the urgent need for safer roads and better infrastructure. They also highlighted ways mine workers can be safer drivers, particularly travelling to and from a swing.

The roadshow emphasised the Fatal Five, the five behaviours responsible for the majority road accidents. They are fatigue, speeding, drinking and drug driving, distraction and seatbelt use. Awareness and avoidance of these factors can dramatically reduce your risk of an accident.



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# WORLD UNIONISTS GATHER IN SYDNEY

**In 2025, Sydney hosted the 4th Congress of IndustriALL Global Union, bringing more than a thousand union delegates from nearly 100 countries to Australia for the organisation's peak decision-making forum.**

**Held every four years, the Congress sets IndustriALL's global priorities and action plan, guiding how affiliates organise, coordinate and confront multinational corporate power in the years ahead.**

IndustriALL brings together mining, energy and manufacturing unions from more than 140 countries, representing tens of millions of workers worldwide. For the MEU, participation in IndustriALL is central to building international solidarity and collective power in industries dominated by global corporations operating across borders.

Hosted by the MEU alongside Australian and regional affiliates, the Congress gave international delegates a firsthand look at how unions in Australia are organising, bargaining and winning. For many attendees, it was their first visit to Australia and a rare opportunity to meet face-to-face with union leaders and organisers from every continent, strengthening relationships that extend well beyond the Congress itself.

The Congress opened with keynote addresses from MEU General President Tony Maher and Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who welcomed delegates and framed the gathering around shared commitments to dignity, safety and solidarity at work. The Prime Minister reflected on the role of unions in confronting global instability and outlined recent industrial relations reforms, including Secure Jobs, Better Pay and Same Job, Same Pay, as efforts to rebalance power at work and improve wages, safety and job security.

As part of the Congress, a full day was dedicated to mining, bringing together union leaders from across the world to address shared challenges around safety, critical minerals and just transition. Delegates discussed the need for global coordination to prevent a race to the bottom as demand for transition minerals accelerates, while defending workers' rights, safety and community livelihoods. The mining conference set priorities for future collaboration, with MEU's General Vice President Stephen Smyth appointed to a leadership role as Chair.

The Congress also marked the final World Mining Conference led by Glen Mpufane, whose decades-long contribution to international mining union coordination was acknowledged by delegates. His leadership has been defined by a commitment to safety, solidarity and holding multinational mining companies to account, shaped by his experience as a mine-worker and trade unionist under apartheid in South Africa.

The Congress concluded with the election of new global leadership and a renewed commitment to organising, international solidarity and collective action, reaffirming the role of strong, democratic unions in defending workers' rights in an increasingly volatile global economy.





# KEEPING TASSIE MINERS SAFE

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



**General Vice President Steve Smyth was appointed in 2023 to a steering committee tasked with reviewing and updating the mine safety regulations that support Tasmania's Mines Work Health and Safety Act. That work continued through 2024 and 2025 and is now in the final stage of public consultation.**

Steve said that Tasmania has a diverse mining industry with a long history and a skilled, experience workforce – but the state's distance from the mainland has made 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're 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 three critical areas from the MEU's perspective.

The first is to establish a statutory tripartite mine safety committee to ensure on-going engagement and scrutiny by unions, government and industry to continually improve safety standards. The second is to develop a comprehensive list of reportable high potential incidents to encourage a positive reporting culture in Tasmanian mines and quarries. Thirdly, a review of required competencies for positions in the mining industry.

"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.

"Even minor events 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."**



# YOUR SAFETY. YOUR UNION. YOUR NEW SAFETY HUB

Staying safe at work isn't just a slogan – it's essential for everyone in the mining and energy industry. That's why the Mining and Energy Union (MEU) launched the Safety Hub in 2025: a dedicated online resource for workers to access up-to-date safety information, tools, and support.

The Safety Hub is your digital home for mine safety in Australia, packed with resources, alerts, and practical guidance on managing everyday hazards. Visit [meu.org.au/campaign/safety-hub/](https://meu.org.au/campaign/safety-hub/) or scan the QR code.

## What's on the Safety Hub?

The Hub covers topics that matter most to members, including fatigue, psychosocial health, respiratory risks, vehicle interactions, noise hazards, and substance use. More topics will be added to address real risks that cause injuries and long-term health issues.

## Key Areas:

1. **Fatigue** – Long shifts and roster changes affect alertness and reaction time. Learn signs and management strategies.
2. **Vehicle Interactions** – Reduce risks between vehicles and people through better awareness and traffic management.
3. **Psychosocial Risks** – Stress, pressure, and workplace culture impact mental health. Find ways to prevent harm from bullying, harassment, and workload issues.
4. **Respiratory Diseases** – Dust diseases like black lung are preventable. Discover controls and monitoring practices.
5. **Alcohol & Drugs** – Impairment is a serious hazard. The Hub promotes fair, transparent policies and guidance for prescribed medications.
6. **Noise & Hearing** – Hearing damage is irreversible and increases other risks. Learn prevention strategies.

## Safety News & Resources

Stay informed with Safety News, including incident alerts, union responses, and national safety discussions. Access practical tools like legislation, MEU policies, guides, posters, and materials for toolbox talks and safety meetings.

## Why Visit the Safety Hub?

The Hub helps workers:

- Understand industry hazards
- Prepare for safety discussions
- Find clear, actionable guidance
- Stay informed about real safety issues

Your voice matters. Use the Hub to challenge unsafe practices, support your mates, and set the standard for safety across every site

Visit the MEU Safety Hub today:



**Stay safe. Stay informed.**

**Stand with the union —  
so everyone gets home safe.**





# TRAGEDY AT COBAR

**The MEU was shocked and saddened by the tragedy at Endeavor mine at Cobar in October, which cost two mineworkers their lives.**

**Our NSW Mine Workers Alliance organisers Todd Ferguson and Daniel Brookman were on the ground supporting members; and our South Western District ISHR Steve Barrett also attended the site.**

Mineworkers Ambrose McMullen and Holly Clarke were killed in an uncontrolled detonation caused by use of explosives in the underground workings. Another injured worker was airlifted from the site.

Police released the site for investigation by the NSW Resources Regulator. Unlike the coal industry, union check inspectors don't have legal authority to conduct independent investigations in metalliferous mines. However, we have been actively engaging with the regulator, the company and all relevant parties to ensure full transparency of the investigation, the preservation of evidence, and the implementation of any learnings that will improve underground mine safety.

South Western District President Bob Timbs described the event as "a catastrophic failure

in the safety systems around the use of explosives."

He said: "In this day and age, that type of accident just should not have happened... We are doing everything in our power to find out what happened and make sure that it never happens again as well as supporting the families and mine workers in the community."

Endeavor mine produces lead, silver and zinc and is operated by Polymetals. The mine recently reopened after a period in care and maintenance.

This tragic loss reverberated not only through the families of the workers, but through the small, tightly-knit Cobar mining community, and across the whole mining industry.

We extend our sincere condolences to the families and loved ones of Ambrose and Holly.

Our collective commitment remains: safety must always come before production. We owe it to every miner, every family, and every community.



## Helping industry return their workers home, healthy and safe, every day.

In 2025, Coal Services continued to partner with industry for a safe workplace and a healthy workforce.



### Mines Rescue

Prepared surface emergency response teams (ERTs) and **460** underground brigade members for emergency response, contributing to more than **25,000 overall** attendances across Mines Rescue-delivered training courses focused on risk management and safe operations



### Coal Mines Insurance

Provided workers compensation cover for more than **40,000** workers across **2,384** policies, helping injured workers recover and supporting employers to achieve safe, sustainable return to work outcomes



### CS Health

More than **20,500** pre-placement and periodic health assessments were performed to monitor worker health and protect against occupational disease

### Regulation & Compliance

Statutory respirable and inhalable dust samples taken from the breathing zones of **3,292** workers to monitor and protect against airborne dust exposure

Data as at 31 December 2025





## VALE GARY WOOD

**In January we brought members the very sad news of the passing of an outstanding trade unionist, Gary Wood.**



Gary began as the Secretary of the then 'Coal Miners Industrial Union of Workers of Western Australia' in 1986, before proudly serving as Secretary of our Western Australian District for over 30 years until his retirement in 2018.

The born and bred Collie coal miner led mineworkers through the highs and lows of the industry. In Collie, a union leader is not just a job. You become a community leader and an advocate for the region. Gary was that community leader.

Gary led the WA District and went up against the likes of BHP and Rio Tinto at their most ruthless. During this time Gary addressed mass meetings of sometimes up to 800 workers in the Pilbara iron ore centres of Port Headland and Newman as workers fought the company that was trying to bribe workers out of collective bargaining.

Gary spent the last decade on the job working tirelessly for members at the troubled Griffin Coal, as the mine faced unprofitability, harsh downsizing, and potential liquidation. This was deeply personal to Gary as a Collie local, as these were his neighbours, and it was his town. Gary's work in Collie has left a lasting legacy on his hometown and demonstrated the need for worker transition schemes for coal workers.

**From our Union, we send our most heartfelt condolences to Gary's loved ones.**



## VALE DALLO

**In September, we laid our friend and comrade Greg 'Dallo' Dalliston to rest.**



**Dallo was the Queensland District's longest-serving check inspector – serving in the role for 25 years. His passionate commitment to safety was born of tragedy. Dallo began his mining career at the Box Flat Colliery in the years shortly after the 1972 tragedy where 17 lives were lost in an underground explosion.**

His firsthand exposure to the aftermath of this tragedy galvanised his commitment to safety. And as we reflect on the loss of Dallo, and the tragedy of fatalities in our industry – we urge you all to follow Dallo's lead.

Dallo was proud to uphold the legacy and tradition of MEU check inspectors. His contribution to our union and safety in the coal industry is legendary.

**From our Union, we send our most heartfelt condolences to Dallo's loved ones.**



# WINNING THE WEST

2025 has been a breakthrough year for the Western Mineworkers Alliance (WMWA) as we continued to build union strength across the Pilbara, deepen engagement with members, and take big steps in collective bargaining with major employers.

A central focus this year has been driving collective bargaining with BHP at key iron ore operations. After years of workers lacking a modern enterprise agreement, WMWA successfully pushed BHP to the negotiating table for a new Union collective agreement covering workers at Area C, South Flank and MAC. Throughout the campaign, organisers and members have been clear and consistent in our message: only a union-negotiated agreement can deliver decent annual pay rises, fairer rosters and stronger conditions.

In 2025 the MEU and the AWU signed a new Memorandum of Understanding that will serve to strengthen the work of the Alliance in bringing bargaining back to the Pilbara.

One of the most exciting developments of 2025 has been the Majority Support Petition (MSP) campaign at Rio Tinto's Paraburdoo mine. Hundreds of workers at Paraburdoo signed the MSP, demonstrating strong support for initiating a collective bargaining process at the site; something that hasn't happened in over two decades in the Pilbara.



This campaign seeks to deliver pay that keeps pace with living costs, improved rosters and leave, faster progression, and better camp and FIFO conditions.

Beyond these campaigns, the Alliance's work in 2025 has continued to bring members together, reinforcing the simple truth that collective action leads to better outcomes. The solidarity and determination shown by Pilbara mineworkers reflects a union that is confident, organised, and ready to keep winning improvements in pay, conditions, and workplace voice.

**Bargaining is back in the Pilbara and 2025 has laid the groundwork for even greater progress in the year ahead.**



## CONGRATULATIONS

**Congratulations to Richie Bunker, Merv Wiki and Andy Collins, who together have built a strong and united Lodge at Moranbah North underground mine, in very tough circumstances.**

Richie, Merv and Andy are retiring and moving on to the next phase of their lives. Their mentorship and support for the next generation of union activists means they are leaving a proud legacy to take the MEU forward.

Merv was a very worthy recipient of the Queensland District's Best Delegate of the Year Award for his care and support of workmates in the wake of the underground explosion at Moranbah North in March, and his excellent communication with members through bargaining and major workforce change.

**We thank Richie,  
Merv and Andy for  
their service to the  
Lodge, District and  
the whole MEU family.**

WIN WITH US IN  
**2026**  
JOIN THE MINING AND ENERGY  
UNION



**MEU.ORG.AU/JOIN**





## UNION WOMEN GET SHIT DONE

In October, MEU women gathered in Mackay for the second Queensland District Women's Conference. In a fantastic three-day event, women from across Queensland (and a few from around the country) joined together to discuss organising, safety, legal developments and well being.

In an inspiring conference full of connection, learning and solidarity, women heard from ACTU President Michelle O'Neil, shared their experiences at work and in the Union, and discussed how to forward the standards and rights for women in our industry. Plenty of fun was also had, as attendees built connection with one another across roles, job sites and lodges.



**Here's to the women driving change  
and shaping the future of our industry!**

## 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 secured a resounding victory.**

Anthony Albanese became 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. Fifty five percent of Australians preferred a Labor government to the Coalition alternative, with Labor winning 94 lower house seats.

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. In Hunter, MEU member and former coal miner Dan Repacholi secured a massive 44.2% of the primary vote – more than the Nationals, One Nation, and Greens combined. This is a testament to Dan's personal popularity in the community and the tireless work he's put in for the people of Hunter over the last three years.

Dan has also secured a well-deserved promotion, becoming the first Special Envoy for Men's Health. In this new role he will work alongside the Minister for Health and Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide to raise awareness of men's mental health issues and deliver practical assistance to improve outcomes.

The election outcome on May 3rd meant that extensive workplace reform introduced by Labor can now be bedded down and will be harder to reverse in future – especially the stamping out the labour hire rort. Now it is up to us to continue to push for reform and to use the new laws to deliver for our workmates, our families, and our communities.





# DEVELOPING DELEGATES

Thanks to the new delegates rights provisions in the Fair Work Act, union delegates have access to paid time off for initial and annual training. The MEU has been quick to utilise these new laws, ensuring that MEU members have access to the best quality support when issues arise at work.

In 2025, we trained over 650 delegates from sites across Australia and delivered over 50 courses, including a 5-day intensive training for new and continuing delegates. This training has been very well received, with all considering the information provided relevant or very relevant to their workplaces. We look forward to delivering more training in 2026!





# LEADERSHIP WITH COURAGE AND INTEGRITY

**Tony Maher's remarkable 27-year tenure as General President of the Mining and Energy Union (MEU) has come to an end, with Tony retiring on 31 December 2025. His dedicated, principled and strategic leadership has left our union in a strong position to meet the challenges of the future.**

**In just the last few years, Tony Maher steered the MEU to three key achievements: independence from the CFMEU, Same Job Same Pay legislation to address the labour hire rort, and co-ordinated support for power station workers facing closure.**

Tony showed great foresight and determination in securing a path to independence for our union when staying part of the amalgamated CFMEU became untenable. It was a complex and controversial undertaking requiring political and legal problem-solving; but as more evidence of criminal activity from the Construction Division emerges, history has shown that his judgment was impeccable. Our members voted 98% in favour of our demerger and have proudly embraced our identity as the Mining and Energy Union.

In the face of widespread exploitation of labour hire workers in the coal industry, Tony led our union's ambitious litigation strategy to end the 'permanent casual' rort and then fight for a political solution, which resulted in Same Job Same Pay laws. So far we've won \$150 million in pay rises at coal mines in NSW and Queensland with these laws, with permanent employment on the rise.

And as a leader of coal workers, Tony was early to recognise that our industries would be significantly impacted by global efforts to decarbonise the economy to address climate change. He has fought for policies to ensure coal workers and communities are supported and not left to pay the price for economic change. While this is still a work in progress, we now have a co-ordinated national authority tasked with supporting workers at closing power stations and investing in diversification of our mining regions.

Tony leaves our union strong and growing. We have grown strongly in the last 12 months to our highest membership numbers ever.

This is a reflection of long-term national leadership that has respected our ground-up democratic structures built around our workplace-based Lodges; and backed our members to stand up for a fair go. We have a hard-earned reputation for responsible militancy. We will take on the employers in our industries who include some of the biggest multinationals in the world, but we aren't reckless with members' livelihoods.

Tony was elected as General President of the union in the early days of John Howard's WorkChoices era, which triggered nationally significant strikes and lockouts in the mining industry including against Rio Tinto in the Hunter Valley. I was on the front line of this years-long fight to protect our rights to organise collectively at work and I know how tough it was. These experiences contributed to Tony's widely-respected judgement and sense of perspective. His approach is to 'negotiate when you can, fight when you must'. They're words to live by, but it's knowing the right time for each that is the real challenge.

Tony has been a friend and mentor to many in our union and he will be missed. But he is leaving a strong union with an experienced leadership team in place. General Secretary Grahame Kelly, Singleton local and former Secretary of the Northern Mining and NSW Energy Division, will take over as General President in 2026 ahead of elections for all positions in 2028. Tony leaves a blueprint for union leadership with courage and integrity that we will all strive to uphold.

**Tony leaves our union strong and growing. We have grown strongly in the last 12 months to our highest membership numbers ever.**





# Supporting your mates.

MATES in Mining provides evidence-based mental health and suicide prevention training and support to workers and families within the mining industry.

For more information about how the MATES program works, and how your organisation can make a difference, scan the code or email: [mininginfo@mates.org.au](mailto:mininginfo@mates.org.au)



[mining.mates.org.au](http://mining.mates.org.au)



MATES 24/7 Helpline  
**1300 642 111**



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# THE BOSS

## CALLED INTO THE BOSS'S OFFICE?

### HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

An employee facing a workplace investigation has rights, including procedural fairness. You must have the opportunity to adequately respond to all allegations, including any that emerge during the investigation process, before any decision is reached.

#### Before the meeting

When told about the meeting, notify your delegate or contact the Union immediately, including the time and location of the meeting. It's important that your union reps know as soon as possible so they are able to prepare and act. If you are called in without warning, ask for the meeting to be rescheduled.

Ask your delegate to accompany you to the meeting. If they are unable to attend, arrange for an alternative support person. Inform the company contact who will be with you at the meeting.

Arrange to meet your support person prior to the meeting to discuss the reason for the meeting, and potential outcomes. Tell them of any previous disciplinary action that may be on your employment record.

#### The meeting

You should expect a minimum of 24 hours' notice before the start of the meeting. The meeting may be held face-to-face, over the phone, or via video conference. In each case, your elected support person should be with you.

You may be stood down on full pay while the investigation takes place, which should be detailed in a written letter.

You will be told the confidentiality requirements of the matter.

You may not be informed of the accusations made until you attend the meeting. If this is the case, request that the allegations be provided in writing.

There is no set time frame that an investigation is required to be completed in, these matters can take a significant amount of time which the Union has no control over.

#### After the meeting

Debrief with your support person. If they're not a union representative, be sure to contact the Union to notify us of the outcome. Continue to update your support person, especially if the company contacts you.

Maintain confidentiality of the matter. Do not interact with any other people who may be involved in the investigation.

If you are stood down, do not attempt to access or use any company property and remain contactable.

See your doctor or mental health specialist to assist with stress management. The Union can provide you with the contact details of independent services that deal with stress and trauma.

**CALLLED INTO A MEETING WITH YOUR BOSS?**

- 1 TELL YOUR UNION REP
- 2 TAKE A DELEGATE OR SUPPORT PERSON TO MEETINGS
- 3 DON'T SIGN ANYTHING YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND OR AGREE WITH

**HELP US HELP YOU**

If you're called into a meeting with your boss, seek union support immediately.



**Be honest, reach out,  
and know your rights.**

**The MEU is here  
to support you.**

**For more information,  
check out this episode  
of the MEU Podcast:**





# MEU out and about



Brothers Shane Beasant from Springvale Colliery and Troy Beasant from Clarence Colliery in NSW, won these magnificent trophies for roof-bolting at the Australian Roof Bolting and Coal Shovelling Titles in Lithgow, an annual event sponsored by our South Western District.



WA Rail organiser Warren Johncock catches up with MEU rail members in Wickham.



WA board members join the 16 Days of Activism against gender based violence and harassment.



Thanks to our member Ash Austin at Rix's Creek, a hairdresser turned coal miner who put her skills to good use on the seven-week picket line.



Our South West District Secretary Andy Davey (left) joined NSW MPs and National Parks representatives in May for the announcement that Mount Kembla – the site of Australia's worst mining disaster – would receive a state heritage listing.



The Kinga Disaster Memorial organising committee, including QLD District and Moura Lodge representatives, delivered a deeply moving tribute service in recognition of the 50th anniversary of the disaster.



The Coal Miners Cup is an annual footy competition for school kids in the Gunnedah region in NSW. Congratulations to 2025 winners Narrabri West, with the trophy presented by MEU check inspector Tony Watson.



Labour historian Alan Murray launched his book about Miners' Federation legend Fred Moore in March, joined by two of Fred's daughters Debbie and Sue; former MEU Communications Director Paddy Gorman and MEU South West District President Bob Timbs.



South West VP Mark Jenkins presented the Mining and Energy Union Award for Leadership to students at Lithgow High School in December.



The MEU was a proud sponsor of the Mates in Mining Fight night in Cessnock in November. The night raised vital funds to help Mates continue to deliver mental health and suicide prevention training and support the families of miners who died last year. Here's Mount Pleasant Lodge VP Josh Dever in the ring.



The MEU Victorian district gathering for Australia's Biggest Morning Tea, raising money for the Cancer Council and their vital work to bring us a cancer free future.



Mount Thorley Warkworth lodge contributing to Calvary Mater hospital in Newcastle to assist with the operations of their state of the art oncology lab and their work researching better treatments for pancreatic cancer.

