

Common Cause.

August 2026

WAMBO WORKERS BEAT MONTHS OF LOCK-OUTS

Nineteen MEU members at the Wambo washery in NSW have had a hard fought win on pay and conditions after standing firm through months of lockouts by coal giant Peabody.

The new deal delivers the equivalent of 4% annual increases to total remuneration, a \$5,500 sign-on bonus and improvements to accident pay and other key conditions.

Despite repeated attempts to force them to back down, members stuck together and secured a strong result. When Peabody finally engaged in genuine negotiations, an agreement was reached in a single meeting.



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PERMANENT JOBS WIN AT APPIN

Appin Lodge members have overwhelmingly backed a new four-year Enterprise Agreement that delivers strong wage increases, a \$3,000 sign-on bonus and the conversion of around 250 labour hire roles into permanent jobs.

The result follows a strategic campaign led by members and delegates, who rebuilt workplace structures, strengthened their delegate network and united behind a comprehensive log of claims.

Along with pay rises of up to 5% a year, members secured new bonuses, stronger stand-down protections and limits on company shutdowns and forced annual leave. It's a powerful example of what can be achieved when members organise, stand together and bargain collectively.

RIX'S CREEK TOLD: YOU CAN'T BEAT SAME JOB SAME PAY

MEU members have secured another Same Job Same Pay win, with the Fair Work Commission confirming employers can't avoid the law by bringing in a new labour hire provider not covered by existing orders.

In a case at Rix's Creek in NSW, the MEU successfully argued that new contractors perform the same work as the mine's drill and blast crew and should be covered by the order. The decision protects the pay rises already won by labour hire workers and sends a clear message that employers can't undermine the gains MEU members have fought hard to achieve.



REMEMBERING PAUL PHILLIPS



Our Union family is mourning the loss of long-time member and former delegate Paul Phillips, who was killed at work at United Wambo Open Cut in the Hunter Valley on 3 August.

Also known as 'Doc', 'Dr Phil', 'PP' and 'Chook', Paul was a respected shotfirer, staunch unionist and fierce advocate for safety who never stayed silent in the face of injustice.

The Union has provided support to Paul's family through the MEU mortality fund and will assist the NSW Resource Regulator's investigation as required.

Paul's name will be added to the Jim Comerford Memorial Wall at the Northern District's annual memorial event on 13 September. May he rest in peace.

BHP MUST ACT ON PASSIVE SMOKING

MEU members in the Pilbara have spent more than three years pushing BHP to address passive smoking at accommodation camps, where smoking is still allowed directly outside workers' rooms.

Members are calling for designated smoking areas away from dongas, a commonsense approach already adopted by other major mining companies.

Despite repeated reports and safety concerns being raised, BHP has refused to change its policy, prompting the Union to take the matter to WorkSafe. The campaign highlights members' ongoing fight for safe and healthy living conditions while on roster.



SAFETY IS CORE DELEGATES' BUSINESS

The Fair Work Commission has ruled that Queensland mining company Batchfire unreasonably refused an MEU delegate's request to use delegates' leave to attend the union's global dust conference earlier this year.

Callide Valley Lodge Secretary Dave Wieden successfully argued that learning about dust exposure, occupational disease and workplace health and safety issues was a legitimate workplace matter connected to his role.

The decision confirms that delegates need access to the knowledge and training required to represent and protect members on critical health and safety issues. It's a win for delegates and reinforces the value of new delegates' rights laws.

WATCH: MEET OUR QUEENSLAND CHECKIES

To celebrate 150 years of Check Inspectors in Queensland mine, we've released a series of videos on these guardians of mine safety. Scan the QR code to meet some of our checkies in Queensland.

