

ASU launches national call centre survey

The ASU has launched a new campaign to improve Australia's call centres for workers.

The ASU wants to make sure all call centre workers enjoy the same, high level working conditions and that all workers are being valued and paid fairly.

The call centre industry is a major employer in Australia and an integral part of our nation's economy, but the ASU is concerned that significant unfair employment practices and high turnover rates still exist.

As part of a new campaign, the ASU has launched the **It's your call: Improving Australian call centres for workers** survey.

ASU Branch Secretary Ingrid Stitt said it had been about ten years since the union carried out its first major call centre survey.

"For over a decade we have campaigned for the rights and safety of call centre workers and we have been successful in having a number of initiatives adopted, but now it's time to refresh and have a new look at the industry."

Ingrid said past achievements included:

- The creation of the contract Call Centre Award, which governs wages and conditions for workers in contract call centres
- The establishment of a best practice guide for Occupational Health and Safety in call centres and
- Lobbying for a call centre code, which governs procurement for call

centre work contracted-out by the Victorian Government.

Ingrid said the ASU was now asking for feedback across a range of matters, from workplace health and safety, to shift-work, training and targets.

"For over a decade we have campaigned for the rights and safety of call centre workers... but now it's time to refresh and have a new look at the industry."

"We are really keen to hear what people like about their jobs, what they don't like and what they want to see improved," she said.

The survey covers staff in both in-house and contract call centres across Australia and across all industries, so if you work in a call centre the ASU wants to hear from you!



You can complete the survey online via www.callcentreunion.com.au or you can request a hard copy of the survey by phoning the office on 03 9320 6700.

Survey respondents can enter the draw for a Macbook (laptop) or two iPods.

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State of the Union: Message from Branch Secretary Ingrid Stitt

As this publication is arriving in your mailbox, we are expecting new IR laws to be introduced into the Federal Parliament.

This will represent the culmination of campaigning right back to the day when John Howard won the 2004 federal election and gained control of the Senate.

What will be important will be seeing the detail of the legislation and making sure that the election promises made by Kevin Rudd prior to the 2007 election are delivered on.

Of most significance to ASU members will be new laws that enshrine the right to collectively bargain with strong provisions to enable Fair Work Australia (the new independent umpire) to resolve bargaining and other workplace disputes.

The ASU is also looking to the Federal Government for legislation that ensures union members can be represented and supported by their union if they choose to be. Too many union members have had their rights to representation trampled-on under WorkChoices.

Another significant election issue was the lack of job security under WorkChoices for workers in businesses with less than 100 employees. Changes are expected to be made that will significantly improve protection from unfair dismissal. Workers in businesses with less than 15 employees will be required to work for a period of 12 months before they are eligible to claim unfair dismissal, compared with six months for workers in businesses with more than 15 employees. Whilst the ASU welcomes the improvements to the unfair dismissal system we do not support lesser rights for workers in smaller organisations.

We have been out campaigning about what we need to see in the new IR laws.

About 70 per cent of our union's members are women and we have seen them hit hard under WorkChoices. The booklet we produced in collaboration with the Textile Clothing & Footwear Union, *Untold Damage: Why women need new IR laws*, features three case studies from the ASU and our bravest members. The booklet was produced to make sure that all federal politicians have an understanding of how WorkChoices is still impacting on workers and where we need to see improvements.

Also in this edition of *Unite*, you will read that we have undergone some small changes at the ASU office to make sure our union is best positioned to meet the needs of our members and grow.

Despite the tough legislative and economic environment of the past year, I am pleased to report that our union has grown in the last financial year. We must keep building on our membership to ensure we remain strong so we can get the best results for our members and deliver the best representation at state and national levels.

Lastly, a report released in October has shown that union members earn more money. The latest *Trends in Federal Enterprise Bargaining* report revealed that union agreements in Victoria boosted pay for workers by an average of 4%, while non-union agreements increased an average of 3.7%. Better wages and conditions are central benefits to belonging to the ASU but don't forget you can make the most of your membership by accessing the range of discounted services and products that have been negotiated to save members money.

During these tough economic times, every dollar counts!

Yours sincerely
Ingrid Stitt, Branch Secretary

ASU office changes focussed on strengthening the union



Sue Small

The ASU office has undergone a small restructure to its organising areas, to focus on strengthening and growing the union. The office changes have seen the creation of a Growth Team, which is focussed on growing the ASU's membership in new workplaces and areas of the economy. Branch Secretary Ingrid Stitt said the union must continue to be member focussed to remain strong.



Kassey Dickie

"We must continue to grow and increase our membership in our existing workplaces, as well as grow and increase our numbers in new areas of the economy.

"A stronger ASU, with an active membership, increases our capacity to win improvements in wages and conditions for our members and to campaign on universal issues impacting on workers such as maternity leave and climate change."

As a result the new Organising responsibilities are:

- Sue Small has moved to Organising in the Airlines Industry
- Kassey Dickie will take over Organising the Community and not-for profit sector
- Jo Katsoulas will move to Organising in new workplaces.



Jo Katsoulas

ASU MEMBERSHIP GROWS!

Your ASU is growing, despite the tough economic and recent political climate. In a recent report provided to branch conference, membership figures reveal net membership growth from the 1 July, 2007 – 30 June, 2008.

The airlines, call centre and not-for-profit sectors were the highest growth areas. We must keep building on our membership to ensure we remain strong so we can get the best results for our members and deliver the best representation.

Unions wait for Rudd Government to unveil new IR laws

The Rudd Government is expected to unveil its new industrial relations laws this month.

The first round of IR changes were made in March this year with the abolition of Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) and some other minor amendments, however the majority of WorkChoices laws are still governing Australian workers.

A special working group set up by the Rudd Government, the Committee on Industrial Legislation's (COIL) has been working behind closed doors on the draft laws and giving feedback to the government.

Australian unions are calling for new industrial relations laws that give workers stronger collective bargaining rights, protection from unfair dismissal and a powerful independent umpire.

They also want to see the abolition of the Australian Building and Construction (ABCC) so construction workers have the same rights as everyone else.

Unions are concerned that the new laws will not be strong enough in some areas such as dispute resolution and the application of awards and their coverage.

The Rudd government is expected to introduce the substantive bill into Parliament this year, with the new laws starting to take effect from July 2009.

In the meantime major employers are still able to use WorkChoices to push down wages, conditions and rights for Australian workers as outlined in a booklet produced by the ASU and TCFUA.

The booklet, called Untold Damage: Why women need new IR laws, gives real life examples of how WorkChoices is still impacting on workers. (See separate story).

Unions campaign for better laws for working Australians

Australian women hurt by WorkChoices have sent a powerful message to politicians via a new booklet produced by the ASU and the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia (TCFUA).

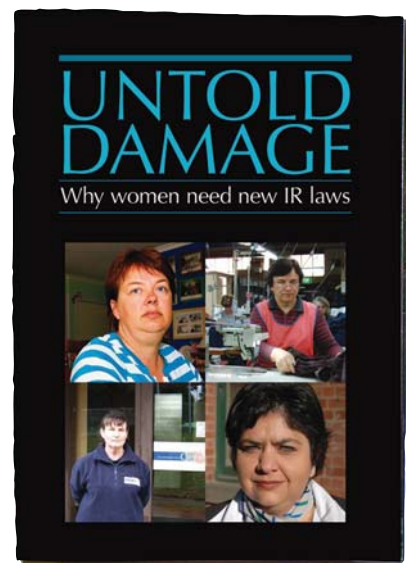
Both the ASU and TCFUA of Victoria have a high number of women members and have recorded many instances where members have been negatively affected by WorkChoices laws.

The two unions joined forces to produce a booklet, Untold Damage: Why women need new IR laws, to make sure federal parliamentarians know exactly how WorkChoices is still adversely affecting women workers in 2008.

Representatives from the ASU and the TCFUA, along with some of our bravest members, travelled to Canberra to launch the booklet and lobby federal MPs and Senators.

And the booklet has been distributed far and wide to make sure as many people as possible are informed about the need for new laws.

The lobbying was part of a last minute push to make sure the Rudd Government's new workplace laws support working Australians.



The campaign focussed on: the right to collectively bargain, freedom of association, right of entry, the award system, protection from unfair dismissal and the need for an independent umpire.

Both unions argue that new laws – beyond the scrapping of WorkChoices – are needed to assist working women.

You can download a copy of Untold Damages from the ASU website at www.asupsvc.org

ASU provides input into the future of aviation

The ASU recently lodged its submission to the Rudd Government on the introduction of a Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme, calling for the creation of a Sustainable Aviation Fund. In its submission the ASU, which is the largest Australian union covering aviation industry workers, outlined the industry's importance in connecting Australia to the world economy by providing international and domestic travel and access to world markets.

The ASU said the creation of a Sustainable Aviation Fund would ensure a long-term solution and planning to compensate for the short term cost pressures that would be associated with the introduction of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.

The ASU's National Airlines Division Council, which met earlier this year, identified climate change as an issue that would have a significant impact on members.

The ASU is also sending a delegation to the International Transport Workers' Federation Sustainable Aviation and Climate Change conference in London in this month to pursue the union's ideas.

In addition to having a say on the sustainability of the industry, the ASU has also made a submission to the Rudd Government on the development of a National Aviation Policy. The thoughts of nearly 800 frontline aviation workers, who took part in a national survey, provided vital feedback to the ASU and helped shape the union's submission.

In the report to government the ASU outlined its stance on a range of matters such as foreign ownership, subsidies, air rage, security risk and airports. The Rudd Government is expected to release its new aviation policy statement in mid 2009.



Lights, camera, action:

ASU Organiser David Leydon (centre) and members Athelene Pickering (from Maurice Blackburn) and Norm McMurray (also from Maurice Blackburn) recently took part in filming for a new ACTU advertisement. The advertisement promotes the value of union membership and can be viewed online at www.unionsaustralia.com.au. Earlier this year, another ASU member Enza Peers featured in a Your Rights at Work advertisement filmed by the ACTU.

Commission recommends 18 weeks paid leave for mums

The Productivity Commission has recommended an 18 week, government-funded paid maternity leave scheme.

Under the proposal, working women would receive 18 weeks paid leave at the adult minimum wage (\$544 per week). The scheme also provides for two weeks paid leave to eligible partners.

ASU branch secretary Ingrid Stitt said while unions welcomed the introduction of a national paid maternity leave scheme, they believed employers should be required to "top up" the government payments, so women have their full income replaced while on leave.

Ingrid said currently two-thirds of Australian women have no access to paid leave. She said the introduction of a paid maternity leave scheme would bring Australia into line with international standards.

"At the moment there is a real disparity across our membership around who has access to paid leave and for how long," Ingrid said.

"In higher unionised organisations, where collective bargaining sets the wages and conditions, paid maternity leave tends to be more generous but in some workplaces there is minimal to no paid maternity leave."

Ingrid said regardless of the final design of a national maternity leave scheme, the ASU would be pushing for up to two years maternity leave in future agreements, with a generous proportion of this leave being paid.

"In addition to paid leave, we want our members to be able to access up to two years unpaid parental leave.

"We also believe our members should be able to attend up to 38 hours of pre-natal leave during pregnancy and when they return to work, they should have the right to return part time.

"We will be fighting for these conditions in future agreements because they help achieve a greater work and family life balance."

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has said that it's time for the Australian Government to "bite the bullet" on paid maternity leave, but the government is yet to formally respond to the Productivity Commission draft report.

The commission will submit its final report to the government in late February 2009, after undertaking further consultation.

You can view the commission's full report at www.pc.gov.au.



ASU member Tracey Osborn of Qantas resources and planning, is pictured with her two children Ava and Angus. Tracey recently returned to work after taking maternity leave for Ava's birth in late 2007. Under the ASU's collective agreement at Qantas, Tracey is entitled to 12 weeks paid maternity leave and can take up to two years unpaid maternity leave. The ASU will be fighting for better conditions in all future collective agreements. The ASU believes that in addition to a national paid maternity leave scheme, which is being investigated, employees should also be able to bargain for greater leave.

RDO win for trust workers

Workers at Cheltenham Regional Cemeteries Trust (CRCT) have a reason to smile after winning a Rostered Day Off (RDO) in their next collective agreement.

The introduction of an RDO was a key condition for members at CRCT and is in addition to a pay increase and other health and well being provisions. Staff have given in-principle support for the new agreement but must wait for approval from the relevant Victorian Government departments before they can vote officially.

For more information contact Kassey Dickie on 9320 6718.

Spark and Cannon join the ASU

The ASU recently welcomed a new workplace, with court transcribers from Spark and Cannon joining the union.

Three representatives, Sharna Furlong, Alison Whitehead and Beng Oh, are leading the charge at Spark and Cannon as negotiations for a new agreement are underway.

The ASU has been working with the workplace representatives to make sure that they understand their options under the existing workplace laws and ways to improve their bargaining power.

More than 70 per cent of the staff have joined the ASU over the last two months.

For more information contact Helga Svendsen on 9320 6707.

Toll Dnata still fighting for collective agreement

Toll Dnata workers at Melbourne's International Airport and the ASU had a recent win in their fight against sub-standard employment contracts.

The ASU has been publicly campaigning against Toll Dnata's AWAs (Australian Workplace Agreements) and ITEAs (Interim Transitional Employment Agreements) after estimating that staff were being under-paid about \$5,000 a year, when compared to the Award.

The ASU's belief that the contracts were sub-standard was confirmed when the Workplace Authority wrote to Toll Dnata staff in mid September, notifying them that their employment contracts had failed the No Disadvantage Test and must be fixed.

Staff have recently been informed that they will now be receiving wages and conditions in accordance with the Airline Operations Award. As a result staff have now won-back important conditions such as allowances and penalty rates.

Other potential breaches of the Act identified by the ASU are still under investigation by the Workplace Ombudsman and the Victorian Workplace Rights Advocate.

The campaign for a union collective agreement with Toll Dnata is continuing.

For more information contact Sharon De Silva on 9320 6717.

ASU award modernisation threatens the value of women's work

Value of women's work threatened by award modernisation

The value of work performed by Australian women is being threatened by moves currently underway to modernise awards. Our achievements in gaining recognition for skills that are traditionally performed by women are under threat.

For 100 years women have campaigned for the right to have their skills recognised and rewarded. Women employed in occupations such as nursing, childcare, social welfare or clerical and administrative work were not sufficiently rewarded or valued for the work they did. Training was informal and pay was a lot less than male dominated occupations.

For most of the last century, women were not even paid the same award wages as men when doing the same work or work of equal value.

Despite the introduction of equal pay in the 1970s, women are still struggling to gain the same pay as that of their male colleagues.

In the early 1990s, government reforms meant we had greater ability to fight for, achieve and implement our objectives around recognition of skills and career paths.

Award restructuring and training reform delivered historic shifts in the attitudes to women's work.

The great steps forward for women must not be undermined by proposals to abolish occupational awards and submerge them into industry awards.

This will turn the clock back and make it hard for women to achieve reward for their skills in industries where women have little voice or influence.

We call upon the Deputy Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, unions and employers to protect the hard won gains of women workers. We must ensure that their skills, pay and conditions are protected and advanced through the continued existence of occupational awards.

Our equality at work is under threat and we cannot allow this to happen.

Authorised by Gail Kearney, Federal Secretary, Australian Nursing Federation (ANF) & Linda White, Assistant National Secretary, Australian Services Union (ASU), Oct 2008



the CWA supports the principle of this statement

Led by the ASU and the Australian Nursing Federation (ANF), a large and diverse group of associations concerned with women's recognition and rights united last month to oppose the downsizing of women's awards.

As part of the campaign, the ASU and ANF published an open letter in national newspapers, calling on the Federal Government to protect the hard won gains of women workers.

The Rudd Government is reducing the number of awards that exist, through a process called award modernisation. The clerks award is one of the first modern awards being created.

Victorian office and administration employees will lose pay and conditions if the clerks award recently drafted by the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) becomes final.

The ASU is also concerned by plans to have the new award only apply to a small number of workers, with the majority of workers to be moved into an industry award.

Branch Secretary Ingrid Stitt said the clerks award was important because it made sure that the specific occupational skills of office and administration workers were recognised – no matter where they worked.

"An occupational award allows for specific classifications about roles and skills – matters that we have had to campaign for over many years," she said.

"If this changes and everyone is put into one big basket, there is a real threat that the value, skills and role of these workers – most of

The ASU is concerned by plans to have the new award only apply to a small number of workers...

whom are women – will be devalued and reduced. The clerks award has to remain applicable to all administration, office and clerical workers – no matter where they work. It's extremely important that we protect the conditions in the award and where it's applied because the modern award will effectively set the floor for the terms and conditions of employment for all workers."

Assistant National Secretary Linda White said the ASU and other groups had to act because "downsizing women's awards will remove the hard earned recognition that women have gained over the past 100 years".

"It will affect all women who work, particularly women in clerical and administrative, nursing and childcare work," she said.

In the advertisement, the groups call on the Federal Government and the Australian Industrial Relations Commission to ensure women's gains in the workforce are not lost.

In addition to the two unions, the supporters of the statement included the CWA (Country Women's Association), NUS Women's Department (National Union of Students), WEL (Women's Electoral Lobby) and WAVE (Women in Adult and Vocational Education).

■ Value of women's work threatened: a copy of the advertisement that appeared in national newspapers.

ASU 2008 BRANCH CONFERENCE



The ASU 2008 Branch Conference was held in North Melbourne in October. ASU branch president Vicki Rogers and executive committee member Jo Craddock are pictured at the conference talking with Australian Super representatives Colin Ormsby and Andrew Cooper during a break. Executive members and conference delegates attended the forum to hear about the union's activities, from workplace issues to finances, over the past 12 months. Attendees were also discussed and debated about future campaigns that will be undertaken.

ASU DELEGATE PROFILES



NAME: Jaclyn Rush

POSITION: Contact Centre Consultant

WORKPLACE: Qantas Holidays

LENGTH OF TIME AT YOUR WORKPLACE: Six years.

What's the best thing about your job? I book holidays!

What's the worst? Nothing.

What do you enjoy doing after work? Catching up with friends.

Why is belonging to a union important to you? Collective bargaining power.

How long have you been an ASU delegate? Eight months.

What is the biggest challenge facing Australia's future prosperity - the economy or the environment? I believe the economy is the biggest challenge that Australia is facing.

Jaclyn is a workplace delegate alongside Michelle Chilcutt and Nigel Carpay.

Want to become a union delegate in your workplace? Contact your ASU Organiser to find out more on 9320 6700.



NAME: Katelyn Fryer

POSITION: Project Manager
WORKPLACE: Environment Victoria

LENGTH OF TIME AT YOUR WORKPLACE: 10 months

What's the best thing about your job? Being able to travel around the state and work with diverse communities on key sustainability issues.

What's the worst? There are just not enough hours in the working day!

What do you enjoy doing after work? Photography, cycling and watching foreign/art house films.

Why is belonging to a union important to you? The union helps us maintain our excellent conditions, benefits and entitlements here at work. This is very important.

How long have you been an ASU delegate? Six months.

What is the biggest challenge facing Australia's future prosperity - the economy or the environment? The environment – well, climate change. However, the economy and the environment are linked. If we all play our part to reduce our demand on natural resources, we will reduce the impact of climate change, which will in turn benefit the economy, both in Australia and globally.

Katelyn is a workplace delegate alongside Michele Burton.



NAME: Robyn Bull

POSITION: Banking Supervisor
WORKPLACE: Target (Head Office)

LENGTH OF TIME AT YOUR WORKPLACE: 21 years

What's the best thing about your job? The friendships I have formed over the years.

I also enjoy what I do, including 'nerdy' stuff like reconciling. Obviously Target has a lot of different areas and each has its own situations but I feel lucky that I work with great team members and in a happy environment.

What's the worst? Probably the apathy of people in respect to their rights.

What do you enjoy doing after work? Spending time with my family and friends and my weekend breakfasts and my time at yoga.

Why is belonging to a union important to you? Because I believe as a group we can achieve many things. Standing on your own means you are only concerned about what you will get and not the workforce as a whole. To be a part of achieving something, no matter how small, is a very satisfying feeling.

How long have you been an ASU delegate? I think around 14 years.

What is the biggest challenge facing Australia's future prosperity - the economy or the environment? I believe they go hand in hand. I think people in the future will be rethinking how they do things and what they spend their money on. They won't be so frivolous in their homes, for example with power and water. Increasing costs, makes people in turn become more aware of the environment.

Robin is a workplace delegate alongside Susan Charteris.



NAME: Darren Harley

POSITION: Freight Operations Agent

WORKPLACE: Qantas Freight

LENGTH OF TIME AT YOUR WORKPLACE: 3.5 years

What's the best thing about your job? Shift penalties and a reasonably good pay structure, cheap travel (not that I have been anywhere) and I work with a good group of people.

What's the worst? The politics and the inconsistencies. The shift work tends to grind you down after a while. Oh, did I mention the politics???

What do you enjoy doing after work? More work... I have a three and a half year old son who is always on the go! When I can steal a few hours I enjoy having a quiet beer with a few mates or getting out on my dirt bike on the odd occasion. (Yes, I'm still a lad).

Why is belonging to a union important to you? 'Safety in numbers'. All unions are a support group who have got us where we are today, so for me personally, I know that I can raise issues and get the feedback and support from the members.

How long have you been an ASU delegate? Not sure... eight months or thereabouts. You tend to lose track of time when you are a shift worker!

What is the biggest challenge facing Australia's future prosperity - the economy or the environment? If you had of asked that question 12 months ago you would have said the latter however with the dollar weak, inflation high and signs of a recession, I think we may have some worrying times ahead.

Darren is a workplace delegate alongside Mark Slevison (Slevo).

“The union helps us maintain our excellent conditions, benefits and entitlements here at work. This is very important.”

Toni calls ASU home for two weeks

Not even a 4am start was enough to put customer service consultant Toni Brown off her two weeks experience as the ASU's participate in the Anna Stewart Memorial Project.

In fact, the training and work experience has inspired Toni to further her involvement in the union movement.

Toni was selected by the ASU to take part in the Anna Stewart Memorial Project, which was set up to honour Anna Stewart, a former journalist and active Victorian union official, who died tragically aged 35.

Through the program each year a group of women take part in training sessions, learn about the history and role of unions and then undertake a work placement with their respective unions.

Over two weeks in October, Toni was exposed to the full range of union work from a workplace blitz, to EBA meetings and even a return to her workplace to welcome new delegates.

"It was absolutely brilliant," Toni said.

"It was more than I expected and I would recommend it to anyone if they got the chance.

"I made a lot of good friends through the course and they are friendships that will last forever."



Customer service consultant Toni Brown was one of 12 Victorian women to take part in the Anna Stewart Memorial Project this year. Over the two weeks, Toni learnt more about the history and role of unions and was exposed to the work of ASU Organisers.

Toni says there were no 'down-sides' to her two weeks with the ASU, not even the fact that she had to get up at 4am one morning to be at the airport.

"If you ask what was one stand-out, for me it was that Organiser's don't stop – they are busy, it's full-on, 24/7."

The project was the first experience of its type for Toni, who has been a delegate at Publicis for three months.

"Now I know I can go back to work and I know that I have the tools and knowledge to pursue problems in the workplace and I can be an advocate for my workmates," she said.

For more information on the project visit www.vthc.org.au.

ASU ACCOUNTS NOW AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE

Your branches' financial details are now available on the website. In line with reporting requirements, the ASU's financial records are posted on the website for members to view. You can download the 2007/08 union accounts at www.asupsvic.org

ASU community workers returns to Canberra

UnitingCare Community Options (UCCO) workplace rep Rachael Scott first went to Canberra to lobby politicians as part of the Your Rights at Work campaign.

She recently returned, but this time it was to lobby the new Rudd Government for increased funding for the SACS industry and for an end to the confusion about state and federal responsibilities.

Rachael, a team leader for individualised support packages for people with disabilities, has witnessed government funding levels failing to keep up with increasing costs. She says under the previous government there was a real "depreciation in the value of people."

"We just need to keep on fighting for better funding in our area as a whole because we were let down by the previous government.



ASU member Rachael Scott (left), from UCCO is pictured with ACTU president Sharan Burrow (centre) and Rachel Abdulla from South Australia at the launch of the ASU's CP (Care Professional) magazine in Canberra this year.

"While in Canberra I was able to put a human face on this issue and I explained that the lack of funding means that one of our clients now misses out on one shower a week."

Similar to many of her other colleagues, Rachael does not want to leave the industry but wants to see it improved. As part of the organised trip to Canberra, Rachael took part in one-on-one meetings with Members of Parliament, a presentation to the social policy committee and attended the launch of the ASU's new magazine for SACS workers – CP (Care Professional). She confesses that at the end of three-day excursion she "collapsed in a heap."

"It was a good experience and if anybody else gets the opportunity they should give it a red, hot go.

"It was a great opportunity the first time around with the Your Rights at Work campaign and this time was about following it up and keeping them honest."

ASU Assistant National Secretary Linda White said the ASU was campaigning for a raft of improvements across the SACS industry.

"There are a number of problems that must be fixed," Linda said. "Social and community services are facing a workforce crisis; the services are not given enough money to meet their needs; workers are paid low wages and issues like competitive tendering and short term funding plague the industry."

ACF, Oxfam and Slater and Gordon take part in stress projects

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), Oxfam and Slater and Gordon have shown a commitment to reducing stress at work by taking part in innovative projects with the ASU.

The ASU has been working closely with the three workplaces this year to develop model programs that look at stress in the workplace and current policies and processes.

Branch Secretary Ingrid Stitt congratulated the three workplaces on being involved.

“By taking part these organisations have shown leadership and are providing their valuable time and staff to help develop and carry out innovative work,” she said.

At ACF and Oxfam, the ASU aims to develop early intervention strategies that can be implemented as part of a pre-claim return to work process.

As part of the pilot, the ASU has hosted a series of focus groups with staff at ACF and Oxfam to find out what causes stress in the workplace and possible solutions.

The work being undertaken with Slater and Gordon is aimed at developing a best practice return to work process for stress claims.

This project involves assessing current policies and procedures, literature and other material to develop a benchmark.

It is hoped that once assessed, the three programs can be rolled out into other workplaces.

The projects are being funded through a grant from the WorkCover Return to Work Fund (RTW Fund) and follows a survey of ASU members in 2007.

The survey of 1,000 members last year across a range of industries found stress in the workplace was an issue for almost 90% of the respondents.

The survey found one in five members described their workplaces as “very stressful.”

And one third of the respondents had taken sick leave as a result of workplace stress.

For more information contact OH&S Organiser Linda Cargill 9320 6700.

GENERAL CONTACT DETAILS FOR YOUR UNION

Phone: 03 9320 6700 Fax: 03 9320 6799

Email: info@asupsvc.org

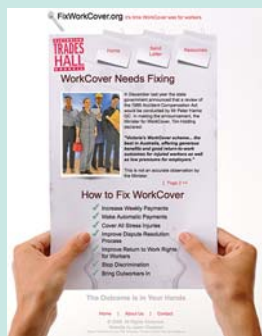
Web: www.asuvc.org

Postal: PO BOX 324, North Melbourne, VIC, 3051



ASU and supporters visits Publicis

The ASU has been spreading the union message at a number of workplaces visits over the past couple of months. The workplace visits are aimed at making sure as many people as possible know about the benefits of being in the union. Members Equity Mobile Lending Manager Ron Ahern is pictured above with delegates Jason Hunt, Dean Pearcey (centre), Toni Brown, Judy Clarke, Alex Sayers and ACTU Member Connect Marketing Officer Rebecca Patena at a recent visit to Publicis Loyalty offices in Collingwood.



Victorian Government expected to respond to WorkCover review

The Victorian Government is expected to deliver its response to a review of WorkCover this month.

Late last year the Brumby Government appointed Peter Hanks QC to undertake a review of the Accident Compensation Act.

Victorian unions, including the ASU, are concerned by a number of recommendations made in the review, particularly around stress claims.

The report has recommended that the Act be amended to exclude all stress injury claims that arise from any “reasonable management action”.

The proposed change is in direct contradiction to the underlying principle of the Victorian WorkCover system that it is a “no fault” system, whether on the part of the employer or the worker.

The change has the potential to impact on workers, including ASU members, by making it harder to receive compensation from stress claims.

The unions have been campaigning against this and other changes and are calling on the government to improve WorkCover across seven key areas.

Unions are now on stand-by as the Victorian Government is expected to release its response in November.

Visit the Fix WorkCover website for further information, www.fixworkcover.org or contact OH&S Organiser Linda Cargill on 9320 6700.

HAS THE ASU GOT YOUR LATEST DETAILS? Have you moved recently or got a new mobile or email address and forgotten to let us know? Please complete the slip below and return it to the ASU, PO BOX 324, North Melbourne, VIC, 3056.

Name _____ Member number (if known) _____

Current Address _____

Contact numbers (home) _____ (work) _____ (mobile) _____

Personal email _____ Work email _____