



Labor moves to protect workers' pay, entitlements from collapses

THE redundancy entitlements of working Australians caught up in company collapses will be secured under a Labor government crackdown on unscrupulous corporate behaviour.

The Protecting Workers Entitlements package will ensure that workers receive full redundancy pay of up to four weeks for every year of service as part of the Fair Entitlements Guarantee. It will also protect annual and long-service leave and up to three months of unpaid wages.

Laws will also be strengthened to protect workers' super entitlements. "Nothing angers workers more – and rightly so – than companies that do not honour their commitments to workers," said ASU Branch Secretary Ingrid Stitt. The guarantee package also gives the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) increased powers to take action against companies that ignore their responsibilities. Reforms will be introduced that target "phoenix" company arrangements, in which directors shift assets to a new company to avoid their obligations to workers.



Workers' rights at risk under Liberals

THE Australian Services Union is urging its members not to give Opposition Leader Tony Abbott the chance to reintroduce the worst aspects of the repressive WorkChoices legislation.

Union officials, volunteers and workers have spent the past five weeks handing out flyers and informing the public on what a return to a Liberal Government would mean for Australia's workforce.

According to the ACTU an analysis of Labor's Fair Work laws had uncovered 198 separate sections that would allow

the Government to make changes impacting on working Australians without the approval of Parliament.

"Mr Abbott has struggled to remain consistent and make sense when outlining his plans for industrial relations," ASU Branch Secretary Ingrid Stitt said.

"This is very worrying for our members, and one does not have to delve far into his past to see that he is a long-time fan of WorkChoices.

"He'll bring back WorkChoices but give it a different name."

Meanwhile, an ACTU poll revealed that almost three in four Australians

did not trust Mr Abbott's statements that he would not change workplace laws if he became Prime Minister.

Research commissioned by the ACTU found that 71 per cent of Australians do not believe Mr Abbott's denial that he would never change the Fair Work laws.

The research company Auspoll was commissioned by the ACTU to conduct an online survey of 1515 voters on July 20 and 22 to determine their perceptions of Mr Abbott and his impact on Australia's national industrial relation laws should he become Prime Minister.



Message from Branch Secretary Ingrid Stitt

After four weeks of intense campaigning, robust debates and a few political upsets, Australians will finally get a chance to go to the polls to elect our prime minister. While this election has broadened its scope beyond the WorkChoices debate that swept Howard from office in 2007, the stakes for our industrial relations system are equally high. Workers in the last federal poll were fighting a clear injustice: an IR regime that stripped many basic working conditions, including shift penalties, from workers' lives. Three years later, the spectre of WorkChoices-style reforms may be hidden beneath campaign spin, but the threat remains.

Opposition Leader Tony Abbott may not label his IR reforms "WorkChoices", but as the union campaign reveals, he has previously indicated his support for greater "workplace flexibility" and changes to unfair dismissal laws. Mr Abbott knows he cannot use the term WorkChoices, and has spent much of the campaign issuing confusing remarks about

industrial relations changes, which have rightly made workers nervous. The reality is we cannot improve workplace laws by returning to a Coalition government.

On a more personal level, my best wishes also go out to Sharan Burrow, who has given up her role as ACTU president for a job as the general secretary to the Brussels-based International Trade Union Confederation. I look fondly back on the unreserved support she offered the ASU while we were deep in the mire of the Your Rights at Work campaign. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to outgoing Finance Minister and former ASU official Lindsay Tanner in the wake of his decision to stand down from his Melbourne seat.

After Julia Gillard was elected by the Labor caucus as the new prime minister, Lindsay announced he would not re-contest the seat.

Lindsay rose to prominence in the 1980s when he won office in the

Federated Clerks Unions (now the ASU) and set about modernising the union and opening its doors to members, especially women. It was a tumultuous time in our union's history and we owe a lot of our success to the key modernising reforms that Lindsay spearheaded. We wish him all the best for the future.

Finally, moving on from the fairground that is federal politics to the day-to-day machinations of bargaining. We are right in the thick of some tough negotiations with employers – Qantas and Target come to mind – and I urge all of our members to stick together during our testing bargaining periods to ensure we maximise our collective power. Our strength, as always, lies in our ability to organise and join together.

Yours in Unity,

Ingrid Stitt
ASU Branch Secretary

Growth organiser joins ASU to help spread the union message

THE ASU has continued to boost its services to members with the addition of two new staff members.

Gail Drummond (top right) joined the team last month in the role of growth organiser. She is in charge of developing collectivism in the workplace by identifying, recruiting, leading, motivating and educating workplace representatives, activists and members.

Gail will support members to campaign and negotiate, and will work closely with other organisers and workplace delegates.





Gail has considerable experience in organising sites, and has previously worked for the CPSU, ACTU Organising Centre and HACSU. Gail and our new ASU Assist Advisor, Lucy McLaurin (bottom right), are part of a larger ASU drive to offer members the best guidance in workplace negotiations, and industrial grievances.



■ Contact Lucy or Gail on 03 9320 6700.

Dates for your diary

Please take note of the following training date for delegates and members:

-  **Advanced Refresher**
September 16.
-  **Advanced delegates**
October 12 and 13.
-  **Unionwise**
November 16 and 17
-  **Health & safety training one-day refresher (general)**
October 14
November 5, 16
December 13, 14
(visit: www.ohsrep.org.au).

New discounts, services add value for membership

Your union is thrilled to announce the launch of two new services to further enhance our members' lives over the coming months:

■ The Slater & Gordon online will is a free service for ASU members that allows you to prepare your will via a simple, online form. Head online to: <https://online.slatergordon.com>.



au. Please note: in some cases your circumstances may be too complex to be managed by the Slater & Gordon Online will, in which case you will be given the option of seeking advice from a specialist lawyer.

■ The ASU's new My ASU Rewards program compiles our various member benefits and discounts into one guide, while offering hundreds of additional discount vouchers on leisure and shopping items. Members will also be able to regularly access discount vouchers through our website. My Rewards will be launched in late September.

Qantas ensures first class for a select few

The National Negotiating Team for EBA9 continues to negotiate with Qantas over key aspects of the claim, as management digs its heels in over pay rises.

Qantas workers are asking that the new EBA maintain all existing EBA8 conditions, unless of course they are improved upon; a five per cent pay rise per annum; a rise in the superannuation contribution to 15 per cent; and greater access to annual leave, long service leave and DIL days.

At a recent meeting, NNT members detailed extensive materials about CPI, inflation, the increase in male total average weekly earnings since 1999 and compared these figures to the pay rises of ASU-covered Qantas staff.

Qantas attempted to argue against the wage claim by stating that Virgin Blue staff at airports were paid 12 per cent less than their Qantas counterparts. "The company, however, declined to state what wage outcome they wanted," said Branch Secretary Ingrid Stitt.

"It is hard to escape the conclusion that

Qantas is in the business of driving wages down; except, of course, when it comes to the remuneration of their executives."

Delegates also used the most recent meeting as an opportunity to raise the issue of staff travel and rosters. Qantas

does not believe staff travel should be included in the EBA, although management has conceded it is a matter of importance for employees and they will look at it in parallel with EBA negotiations. The NNT also focused on the claim to increase the notice period for roster changes and shift changes, and highlighted a number of examples where changes were made to rosters that created a lack of certainty for

employees – especially part-timers. Qantas has rejected the ASU's claim to extend the rostering notice period, but has admitted there are rostering and notice problems at airports. Negotiations are continuing.

■ Visit www.asuvic.org for the latest EBA9 news and updates.



UNION NEWS IN BRIEF

■ Full-time workers are finding it increasingly difficult to achieve work-life balance and many women would prefer to be employed part-time, a new survey revealed.

According to the survey, a quarter of women and one-fifth of men working full-time are unhappy with their work-life balance. The findings are the result of a survey of 2803 workers



for the University of South Australia's Centre for Work + Life. The percentage of employees who reported that

work "often" or "always" interfered with life has increased from 19.8 per cent in 2007 to 24.2 per cent in 2010.

Women are battling to work longer hours and meet their obligations to friends and family members, with 60.8 per cent saying they often or always felt rushed or pressed for time compared to 47.2 per cent of male respondents.

■ Work-related exhaustion can be deadly for younger industrial workers, according to a study. Finnish researchers found industrial employees under 45 were almost three times as likely to die as other workers. The most common causes of death among the younger workers were tumour (34 per cent), accident (26 per cent), suicide (26 per cent) and coronary disease (22 per cent).



FROM THE OFFICE FLOOR



REASON TO PARTY: Toll Dnata employees celebrate their first ever EBA.

■ ASU members and employees of Toll Dnata Passenger Services have voted on their first EBA after a protracted struggle with management over pay and conditions.

Since the company began trading in 2008, the 91 passenger service employees have fought hard to bring their conditions up to industry standards. After many months of drawn-out negotiations staff have since voted on an EBA that offers a four per cent wage rise; increased

notice on rosters; introduction of a new buddy training allowance; paid maternity leave (in addition to the government-funded scheme); a guarantee of 20 hours per week for part-timers; and fairer redundancy provisions. The EBA has been submitted to Fair Work Australia for approval.

■ ASU delegates and officials have met with Jetstar management to discuss a number of issues affecting staff at Melbourne Airport.

Sharing of wet-weather gear, sharing of earmuffs, lack of storage and inadequate facilities in the lunchroom were chief among members' concerns. The ASU told management that the sharing of gumboots, jackets and earmuffs was not a healthy practice, and that union members have told the ASU they have experienced outbreaks of contagious diseases such as staph, tinea and athlete's foot. Staff also pointed out that the rosters at Melbourne airport were a risk to members'

health and safety, and did not allow people adequate time to plan their life.

**Give us
a fair
deal,
Target!**



■ Target negotiations are continuing, with both management and the union exchanging their respective claims. Target workers are seeking a five per cent pay rise for all of Target's weekly paid staff, improvements in redundancy provisions, and better conditions for part-timers. The ASU expects negotiations to be tough, and urges all ASU members to stick together.

■ ASU members at Geelong's GMHBA have voted up their new EBA agreement. The agreement allows for pay increases of 4.75, 4.5 and 4 per cent over three years.

■ *For more information on your workplace, log on to www.asuvic.org.*

Union Fees 2010/2011

Per week 30 hours or more

	Adult \$	Junior \$
Weekly	9.65	7.30
Fortnightly	19.30	14.60
Monthly	41.85	31.55
Quarterly	125.45	94.60
Yearly	501.80	378.40

Per week fewer than 30 hours

	Adult \$	Junior \$
Weekly	7.10	5.55
Fortnightly	14.20	11.10
Monthly	30.80	24
Quarterly	92.30	71.90
Yearly	369.20	287.65



WORKERS UNITE: Employees at Kennon Auto in Melbourne's north brave the early morning cold in the midst of a strike over poor pay and conditions. Due to the support the workers received from each other, their Textile Clothing and Footwear Union, the ASU and other unions, the workers were able to force management to agree to a much fairer EBA.