

# ASU Union Active

SA+NT Branch News November 2006



## 2006 - Your ASU Responding to the Challenge

2006 has been a challenging and eventful year for ASU members and your ASU Office.

We face the most hostile industrial relations environment in living memory and perhaps the most hostile in 100 years. It is imperative that workers belong to their Union as it is only through being Active Strong and United that we will see off the Howard Government attacks on members, their families and the broader community.

Despite the challenges (and partly because of them) the ASU can look forward to 2007 with optimism. Membership has remained stable since the introduction of the so called Work Choices legislation and we expect it to grow in 2007 as a result of the additional Organising and Industrial resources we have put in place.

To date we have been largely successful in our campaign to ensure employers in members' workplaces do not use the new laws to cut wages and conditions. We now have a variety of common law agreements in place which protect conditions that would otherwise be prohibited under the laws.



*At the 2006 ASU Workplace Reps and Activists Conference - Katrine Hildyard, Branch Assistant Secretary-ASU SA+NT, Sharan Burrow, President -ACTU & Andy Dennard, Branch Secretary-ASU SA+NT*

2->

*Cover Photo L-R: At the ASU Workplace Reps and Activists Conference: Jonathon Wheatland - Uniting Care Wesley Adelaide, Robyn Rutgers - ASU Organsier, Paul Przibilla - Uniting Care Wesley Adelaide & Tui Le Leisiuau - Uniting Care Wesley Adelaide*



Active Strong United



# 2006 - Your ASU Responding to the Challenge

*We continue to win hundreds of thousands of dollars for individual members in compensation for unpaid wages, unfair dismissals and the like.*

*(see page 7)*

We have significantly reduced our dependence on payroll deduction of Union dues and aim to get this down to about 20% of membership by the end of the financial year and we continue to build a sound financial base.

But let's not kid ourselves, there is much more to be done. It was never going to be the well Unionized or well organised workplaces that were going to feel the brunt of these laws first.

It was always going to be the most vulnerable groups of workers (unorganized, the young, the casuals, the unskilled) being hit first.

*We must continue to build our collective strength and power in our existing worksites and industries and organise new ones so we can protect and improve industry standards in Local Government, the Community Sector, Energy, Finance, Airlines, Call Centres or wherever members and potential members work.*

We will continue to participate in the highly successful Union led Your Rights at Work community campaign to defeat these laws at the ballot box in next year's Federal election.

Most of all we need your continued support because our unity in the face of these attacks on our movement is our greatest asset - get involved in the campaign at your workplace, in your churches, clubs and committees and by participating in community protests.

***Remember - The workers united will never be defeated!***

Andy Dennard  
ASU SA+ NT Branch Secretary

# Working Families

National Day of Union and Community Action  
November 30



On 30 November Australians around the country will stand up for their rights at work and a fair Australia for future generations.

**Will you be there?** Create history and organise to attend with your workmates, family and friends.

From 8.00am in South Australia and the Northern Territory, a Sky Channel hook-up will be broadcast live from the MCG. The broadcast will conclude at around 9.30am. Entertainment after the broadcast is being organized and further details of this will be provided as soon as possible.

Venues in **South Australia** are as follows:

Adelaide	Elder Park, Adelaide
Bordertown	Dukes Motor Inn, Dukes Highway
Millicent	Sportmans Hotel, 72 George Street Millicent
Mount Gambier	Commercial Hotel, 76 Commercial Street
Murraybridge	Murray Bridge Hotel, Sixth St Murray Bridge
Naracoorte	Naracoorte Hotel, 73 Ormerod Street
Port Pirie	Harness Racing Club
Riverland	Berri Resort Motel/Hotel, Riverview Drive Berri
Roxby Downs	Roxby Downs Tavern Motel, Norman Place
Whyalla	West Whyalla Football Club, K M Bennett Oval
Port Augusta	Cooinda Social Club, 32 Flinders Terrace
Port Lincoln	Grand Tasman Hotel
Eyre Peninsula	Cleve - 32 Fourth Street, Cleve
Victor Harbor	to be confirmed
Ceduna	to be confirmed
Leigh Creek	to be confirmed
Kangaroo Island	to be confirmed
Clare Valley	to be confirmed
Yorke Peninsula	to be confirmed

**Northern Territory**

Darwin -	Fannie Bay Racecourse
Katherine -	venue to be confirmed
Alice Springs	RSL Club, 20 Schwarz Crescent Alice Springs

**What to do?** Talk with your Organiser or Branch Assistant Secretary Katrine Hildyard today about how you and your work mates can organize to attend.



# ASU Members Deal with AGL Slashing Workforce



In another indictment of the privatization of SA's electricity industry AGL cut 200 jobs (over 50% of their SA workforce). ASU members have seen hundreds of jobs cut since privatization and this news is devastating as they struggle with higher interest rates and fuel prices. The cuts also affect the South Australian community – you don't improve customer service by slashing over 50% of your workforce.

The cuts raise many issues for members including entitlements and when and how they would be notified about whether or not their job will continue. Unbelievably AGL refused members time to collectively meet with their Union in paid time so ASU members met en masse in the parklands to discuss issues. Many members were concerned about not being given specific termination dates and thereby being denied redundancy entitlements should they successfully secure alternative employment.

Members unanimously agreed they should be treated with respect at this difficult time. ASU members, WPRs and officials have worked together and by drawing public attention to their issues have secured some commitments from management on notice. Your Union has also been meeting with State Government to urge for a referral to the Energy Regulator to assess what the cuts mean for SA and to get assistance for those workers who will need to find new jobs.

Management have advised that Call Centre staff will stay. These workers will bargain early in 2007 and it will be imperative that they stick together if they are to secure their jobs, wages and conditions into the future.



Above: Katrine Hildyard-ASU Branch Assistant Secretary addresses AGL ASU members and AGL staff at the lunchtime member's meeting opposite AGL, Greenhill Road, Adelaide on 18 September 2006. And below: Concerned AGL staff and members with Ian Heard-ASU Organiser.

**"I urge all remaining AGL staff to get active in their Union and support their Workplace Reps in the work they do. It is urgent that we grow membership and stick together at AGL – it is the only way we will have the power to hold onto what we have and make sure we are fairly treated."**

*Michelle Epton  
ASU Workplace Rep at AGL*

**What can you do to help?**

**Call AGL and let them know what you think about their decision to cut ASU members' jobs.**





**ASU**  
Active Strong United

# What will You Be

## ASU WORKPLACE REPS

### Imagine it is Election Night 2007...

What will you have done in your workplace, in your industry, in your community and politically to ensure the values we believe in are embedded in the Australian landscape?

Will you be celebrating the end of the Howard Government's anti-worker, anti-family, anti-community legislation?

This is what ASU Workplace Reps and Activists creatively considered on 22 September at our annual conference.

Chaired by Branch Assistant Secretary Katrine Hildyard the Conference discussed our plan for the future with Branch Secretary Andy Dennard and heard from ACTU President Sharan Burrow, SA Unions Secretary Janet Giles, CPSU Organiser Liz Temple, SA Council of Social Services Executive Director Karen Grogan, SA's three marginal seat Your Rights at Work Community Organisers and ACTU Community Campaign Co-ordinator John Ryan.

Each speaker stressed that to secure rights at work in the long term we MUST grow our Unions, we MUST activate our communities and we MUST politically defeat the Howard Government. The ACTU's proposed vision for the future of industrial relations was also outlined.

Conference delegates made individual commitments on how they would work towards the goals above and took to the stage together to create their vision for election night 2007 and the sort of Australia we want. As well as being committed and active Unionists it was clear from Conference activities that ASU Workplace Reps and Activists also have many creative talents!

If you weren't at the Conference and want to contribute to making our vision for the future a reality you can –

- attend the National Day of Union and Community Protest on 30 November and organize others to attend with you (see details on page 2)
- ask someone in your workplace to join your Union and get active
- get involved in the marginal seat campaigns in SA's three marginal seats or in the Northern Territory seat of Solomon
- get involved in the plan to secure rights at work in your industry

For more information about any aspect of the Your Rights at Work campaign call Branch Assistant Secretary Katrine Hildyard on 08 8363 1322.

### Thanks to Our Generous Sponsors

The Conference and many of the activities your Union organises would not be possible without the generous support of our sponsors Members Equity, Local Super, Australian Super, Statewide Super, Local Government Risk Services, Virtual Communities and ASU Shop who provided funds to make the Conference happen and some fantastic prizes. We thank our sponsors for their support and appreciate their ongoing commitment to the ASU.



Speakers at Conference - Janet Giles, Secretary -SA Unions, A



Julie Bertossa and Marcia Roberts, Uniting Care Wesley Ade

Thank you  
Conference Sponsors



# What are you Doing on Election Night 2007?

## ASU AND ACTIVISTS CONFERENCE 2006 DECIDES



Andy Dennard, Branch Sec.-ASU, Liz Temple-CPSU, Karen Grogan-SACOSS, Katrine Hildyard, Branch Assistant Sec-ASU, Sharan Burrow, President-ACTU & John Ryan-ACTU,



laide

Arthur Tsakonias - Uniting Care Wesley, Rosie Reschke -Savings and Loans, Michael Scicluna -Autism SA, Sue Beaumont-Savings and Loans.

Tom Gale-Members Equity presented the generous prize of a television (donated to our conference by all our sponsors). Congratulations to Jan Duffy-SA TAB.



## TAKE FIVE SECURES UNION AGREEMENT

After successive rounds of bargaining workers at Take Five (part of Uniting Care Wesley Adelaide) were covered by a non-Union Agreement.

Organisers and active ASU members approached potential members about the need to work together to maintain conditions and ensure access to the community services framework agreement which will be linked to lobbying for increased funding for wages. Workers who weren't yet ASU members were asked to take the step of joining their Union. Many workers joined!

With over 50% ASU membership at Take Five ASU Reps can now proudly ask for their collective Agreement to be an ASU Agreement.

**Congratulations to all ASU members at Take Five.**

(community services)

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING A POSITIVE WAY FORWARD

The Howard Government's industrial relations legislation has created uncertainty for Councils across Australia. Are they a constitutional corporation or not?


There is conflicting advice on this issue so many Councils are 'hedging their bets', keeping their existing agreements in place and reaching agreement with the ASU on salary increases and some other matters. These matters are being put into a Memorandum of Understanding or an exchange of letters between the employer and ASU. This approach creates uncertainty for employees on what salary increases they can expect twelve months hence and delays negotiations for future agreements.

**We congratulate District Council of Robe for showing Local Government the way to pay more than lip service to ensuring employees' rights are not eroded by the Howard Government's draconian legislation.**

Robe and the ASU have entered into a comprehensive common law deed that sets out employees' terms and conditions for the next three years in totality. This deed includes all negotiated conditions, a 4.5% per annum increase and a commitment to employees and their Union that DC Robe will not use the new laws to reduce working conditions. The Deed also preserves all Award conditions and protects employees against unfair dismissal.

Across the Union we are working on a set of principles for bargaining in Local Government and we will work with members to have the principles agreed right across the industry. Contact your ASU Organiser for details of these principles and the upcoming Local Government members meeting to discuss how we will secure them.

(commercial)



## RAA MEMBERS BUILD POWER TO BARGAIN

With over 60% membership at the RAA Telephone Assistance Centre (TAC), members now have the power to effectively bargain. WPRs and Organisers recognized the need to have strong membership to ensure wages and conditions are maintained and improved as we bargain in the face of the Howard Government's industrial relations legislation.

Across TAC workers were approached about membership and a number of staff joined. Education sessions about what will disappear from Awards and Agreements and how we can secure these conditions were conducted by Branch Secretary Andy Dennard and Branch Assistant Secretary Katrine Hildyard.

**'As a Workplace Rep it feels much better knowing that you have the support of majority membership behind you as you start negotiations. In the current environment our membership strength will be crucial to the outcomes we get so we'll keep working together to make it even stronger'**

*Grant Evans*



## QANTAS - STILL CALLS AUSTRALIA HOME?

In September Qantas formally announced that the Alice Springs Qantas Retail Office will be closing down for good on Friday October 27, 2006. The 4 staff and ASU members employed at the Qantas Alice Springs Office will be made redundant as a result.

We understand Qantas will also close down other retail stores around Australia retail stores in William Street, Melbourne, Camberwell, and Surfers Paradise. We understand 27 jobs around Australia at Qantas will be lost.

It is also disappointing to see that Qantas are now considering off-shoring hundreds of IT jobs to India. This not only means significant job losses to Australia but raises all sorts of privacy issues as well. It also raises concerns as to what other jobs Qantas may be considering to move off-shore.

It seems that this Australian icon which trades on the fact that it "still calls Australia home" may not be so committed to Australia after all. You can be sure that this is a theme that the ASU and other Qantas Unions will be highlighting to ensure that Qantas realises that in the long run selling Australian jobs overseas will only damage the company brand. Visit [www.asu.asn.au](http://www.asu.asn.au) for up to date Airlines news.

### ASU SA+NT ALICE OFFICE

Stephen Weber, our Alice based Member Services Officer & Organiser has been working from home since May and finally has moved into our new office shared with the LHMU(NT).

New contact details are:-

#### ASU SA+NT Alice Office

Shop 8, Level 1  
82 Todd Street  
Alice Springs

NT: 08 8952 8702  
SA: 08 8121 2498\*  
Mob: 0409 902 219  
Fax: 08 8952 8702

*\*from SA at cost of local call*

# industrial matters

## \$100,000's

### HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF \$\$\$ FOR ASU MEMBERS

Over the past year your Union has worked with members on matters that have resulted in substantial payments to members - payments they would have been unlikely to obtain without Union involvement.

Over the past few months the Union has been successful in obtaining a total of \$148,000 for two members (\$70,000 and \$78,000) in separate issues.

Since the beginning of this year we have assisted thirty members with underpayment of wages claims and twenty plus members with obtaining improved long service leave and redundancy payments.

Whilst there have been many successful underpayment and reclassification claims, significant sums have also been negotiated to resolve ongoing disputes where the employer/employee relationship has broken down and an ASU member has just wanted to leave their place of employment.

Whilst it is rewarding for Union members to be successful in monetary claims and settlements, it is even more rewarding when we are able to assist members to keep their jobs when they have been threatened with redundancy, which we have also been able to do this year.

## \$11,000

### ASU MEMBER AT GOVE WINS \$11 000 FOR UNFAIR TREATMENT

After working in payroll at a small Gove company for over a year, an active ASU member in the commercial sector was pushed out of her workplace after one minor error in her duties. The company alleged that the employee was 'not following lawful direction'. Through working with her Union she was able to resolve this matter and receive a pay out of \$11 000. The member and her family thanked the ASU office and recognized that without being Union they would have had little recourse.



## ASU SA + NT Branch General Purpose Financial Report

The Workplace Relations Act provides that the financial affairs of unions are checked and audited every year. The Act also requires Unions to make this information available to members.

**The audited ASU SA + NT Branch General Purpose Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 2006 and our Operating Report for 2006 can be found to read or download on the ASU website at <http://asu-sant.asn.au/news/>**

Hard copies are available upon request by email to [jprice@asu-sant.asn.au](mailto:jprice@asu-sant.asn.au) or write to J.Price, PO Box 2217, KENT TOWN DC 5071.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the finance or operating reports please email ASU SA+NT Branch Secretary, Andy Dennard on [adennard@asu-sant.asn.au](mailto:adennard@asu-sant.asn.au).



# Working Families

National Day of Union and Community Action  
November 30



*Stand up for your rights at work*

*Australia-wide hookup Live from the MCG  
Adelaide Elder Park 8.00am  
See page 2 for regional and  
Northern Territory details*



www.rightsatwork.com.au  
You can also contact your union, State or Territory  
union council or call the ACTU Hotline on 1300 362 223

Authorised by G Combat ACTU 393 Swanston Street Melbourne 3000

*Does this  
bag contain:*

A: Crushed ice  
for margaritas

B: An underwater  
mah jong set

C: A fish farm to  
feed a village



Australian union members have assisted backyard fish breeding projects in Cambodia through their union's aid agency, Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA.

You can make a difference by making a regular contribution to Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA and supporting projects that deliver real skills to workers and communities in developing countries.

Send to: Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA,  
Level 3, 377 Sussex Street, Sydney  
NSW 2000 or phone (02) 9264 9343  
or fax (02) 9261 1118.

**Union Aid Abroad APHEDA**

The overseas humanitarian aid agency of the ACTU

ABN 76 425 451 089



[www.apheda.org.au](http://www.apheda.org.au)

Donations of \$2 or more to "APHEDA overseas project fund" are tax deductible.

# UNION events

## Workplace Reps & Activists Christmas Drinks

Active ASU members and Workplace Reps are invited to Christmas drinks from 4.30 to 7.00pm on

**8 December 2006** at the ASU Office. Come along and celebrate your hard work and being **active strong united** during 2006! We look forward to seeing you there.

Please RSVP to Jan Schultz on 8363 1322 by 4 December 2006.

## End of Year Closure

Your ASU Office will be closed from 25 December 2006 to 1 January 2007 inclusive. In the event of urgent workplace issues arising, leave a message on the office voice bank, we will be checking the messages

We wish you and your families a safe, happy and peaceful Christmas and an active, strong and united New Year!

**ADVANCED NOTICE**  
Member Education 2007

## Workplace Reps 1 12 to 14 March 2007

call Deb Rust 8363 1322 or email [drust@asu-sant.asn.au](mailto:drust@asu-sant.asn.au)

Authorised by Andy Dennard, Branch Secretary & Katrine Hildyard, Branch Assistant Secretary Australian Services Union SA + NT Branch

5-9 Rundle Street Kent Town 5067 p: 8363 1322 f: 8363 2225 e: [union@asu-sant.asn.au](mailto:union@asu-sant.asn.au) w: [www.asu-sant.asn.au](http://www.asu-sant.asn.au)

design & layout: jude price. photos: rosey boehm & jude price. feedback: [jprice@asu-sant.asn.au](mailto:jprice@asu-sant.asn.au). printing: bmdesign

