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ASU Union Active

SA+NT Branch News March 2009



Our State | Our Industries | Our Union | Our Future
Report on 2008 Workplace Reps and Active Member's Conference

Restoring the Balance
The New Work Laws | Key Elements



Getting Rid of Work Choices More Urgent than Ever

The economic downturn reinforces the need to consign John Howard's Work Choices laws to the dustbin as soon as possible. The relatively good economy and tight jobs market which existed when Work Choices was introduced actually protected many workers from the worst of laws. In poorer economic times it will be much easier to use those laws to exploit workers.

Despite this, the Liberal opposition and big business are trying to use the current economic crisis to argue that the Rudd Labor Government should not implement its electoral mandate to get rid of Work Choices. The argument goes that we should not be restoring rights to workers when business is facing harder times. They want to retain the ability for employers to easily sack workers and drive down their wages and conditions. It seems likely that the Liberals and Nationals will attempt to use their numbers in the Senate to block the Rudd Government's *Forward with Fairness* legislation which aims to dismantle Work Choices (see related article opposite New Work Laws, Restoring the Balance).

We cannot afford to sit idly by and watch the Federal Opposition try and frustrate the will of the people who voted for fairer and more balanced workplace laws at the last election. We urge members to contact SA based Liberal Senators and independent SA based Senator Nick Xenophon (who along with Victorian Senator Stephen Fielding hold the balance of power in the Senate). Tell them to recognise the Rudd Government's mandate and support the *Forward with Fairness* legislation and get it passed as soon as possible.

You can find contact details and a suggested letter to them at www.asu-sant.asn.au/campaigns

By taking this small step now you will be hastening the day when we can finally say that Your Rights at Work have been restored.

Andy Dennard
BRANCH SECRETARY



President's Message

Happy New Year of the Ox to all. Our first year with a new federal Labor government started well and confidence throughout the country was high. The PM's apology to the stolen generation and the signing of the Kyoto Protocol was well received. Deputy PM Julia Gillard started to wind back Work Choices. Ministers Wayne Swan and Lindsay Tanner in charge of finances proved to be a winner and the highlight for me was Senator Penny Wong being appointed as the first ever Minister for Climate Change.

The first half of 2008 was positive and Unions commenced talks with the government about legislative changes to reinstate workers' rights. Then, seemingly overnight, Wall Street collapsed and the impact almost immediately spread throughout the world. The second half of 2008 was looking like an economic crisis with flow on effects to almost every part of our life ... once again, jobs were at risk and this has continued into 2009.

Many members will be negotiating collective agreements in their workplaces this year and although we have never been greedy about our working conditions, many can expect that employers will use the global financial crisis excuse to offer minimum or no wage rises and may even try to remove working conditions. It is up to all of us to ensure that we achieve good outcomes, solid wage rises and most importantly, job security. This can only be achieved if members are united in the workplace.

More members = strength = power to negotiate a 'fair deal'.

2009 may be a difficult year for some Australian workers; remember that workers and Unions have been through tough times before. It is in these times that our strength comes from unity and we shine with brilliance and resilience.

Pam Andritsakis
PRESIDENT



Whilst the new laws are not all our Union have been seeking, they are generally welcome and represent a substantial down payment on the Rudd Government's commitment to restoring balance to industrial laws.

The Rudd Labor Government's industrial relations legislative reforms were tabled in Parliament late last year and are currently subject to a Senate Inquiry. The Government intends the bulk of the legislation to operate from 1 July 2009 although some aspects will not operate until 1 January 2010.

The key elements of the new legislation are:

1) A New National Safety Net

- 10 National Employment Standards (including 38 hour standard week and no unreasonable overtime; parental, annual, personal, long service and community leave; flexible work for parents; redundancy pay; and public holidays).
- Modern awards that cover most (but not all) matters that have traditionally been covered by awards.
- Minimum wages for award free employees set by a new body Fair Work Australia.
- Guarantee that the safety net will be reviewed to ensure minimum wages and conditions are adjusted over time.

2) The Restoration of Unfair Dismissal Rights to those who were Denied such Rights under Work Choices

- Subject to 6 month qualifying period (or 12 months if employed in a business of less than 15 employees).
- Removal of exemption that existed under previous laws which allowed employers to dismiss employees without recourse for 'operational reasons'.

3) Greater Support for Collective Bargaining

- No new Australian Workplace Agreements (statutory individual contracts).
- Collective agreements cannot undercut the National Employment Standards and must ensure employees are better off overall compared with relevant award.
- Parties must bargain in good faith. If the majority of employees want a collective agreement then their employer must enter genuine negotiations for one.
- Far fewer matters prohibited from collective agreements than under previous laws.
- Facilitates making agreements covering multiple employers in low paid industries where bargaining with individual employers is difficult or impracticable, eg, community service organisations. As a last resort such agreements can be arbitrated.

4) New Rights to Consultation, Representation and Fair Treatment

- Employees have the right to be represented by their Union.
- Unlawful to disadvantage employees who join, are represented by or are active in their Union.

- Improved rights for employees to see and get advice from their Union or potential Union at work.
- Workplace agreements must provide for consultation and representation at work.
-
- **5) New Independent Tribunal Fair Work Australia Established**
- Will set and adjust minimum wages and awards, supervise good faith bargaining and make orders where necessary, determine unfair dismissals and deal with grievances through mediation or arbitration where parties agree or collective agreement provisions provide for it.

6) Ability for Local Government to Be Handled by State IR System

- The State Government can opt to cover Local Government in its own industrial relations system; this is likely to be the SA outcome although discussions are ongoing.

These improvements are welcome and must not be held up or frustrated in the Senate. (see article opposite Getting Rid of Work Choices™).

Your ASU will continue to lobby for improvements, particularly the following:

- No restrictions on what can be bargained for between employers and employees and their Unions.
- The ability for Fair Work Australia to arbitrate on all disputes regardless of whether the employer agrees.
- Provisions ensuring the making of so called 'modern awards' cannot result in the diminution of any employee's wages or conditions.
- Less 'red tape' around the taking of protected industrial action during bargaining.

Fair Work Bill - Fact Sheets Available for download from www.asu-sant.asn.au/news

ACTU-ASU Victoria Bushfire Appeal

Like others, Union members and their families have been devastated by the bushfires in Victoria. In rapid response, ASU Branches across Australia have committed \$20,000 to the \$250,000 ACTU Victoria Bushfire Appeal. In addition to our whole-of-Union contribution ASU members in SA and NT*, and right across Australia, are collecting in their workplaces for the ACTU - ASU Victoria Bushfire Appeal.

To find out how you and your colleagues and workmates can contribute please visit www.asu-sant.asn.au/news ACTU-ASU Bushfire Appeal

*See their stories in the next edition of ASUnion Active



Our State | Our Industries | Our Union | Our Future



Minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Training and Further Education addressed the issues for building a strong SA workforce.

An ageing workforce and skills shortages are common across a number of industries. The need to work together in the community sector to address urgent workforce issues in order to be able to provide high quality services in an environment where the sector deals with increasingly complex community need was again highlighted. The work life debate at large and particularly issues for women and carers continue to add to the challenges industries face. It was also clear we are only just beginning to deal with the impending effects of climate change on all industries into the future.

It was pleasing to hear positive messages from a number of speakers about how SA is placed to deal with these issues. We look forward to working in partnership with government and industry to ensure a vibrant, fair and economically and environmentally sustainable SA.

Following each speaker a short question time allowed members to ask lively questions across the range of topics raised by our distinguished guests.

Members convened in small groups to discuss what the challenges raised by our speakers mean for our state, industries and Union. Many themes emerged; the common threads were the need for ASU to be a relevant and engaged stakeholder in the industries we cover and that it is imperative for ASU to be actively involved in building sustainable industries able to cope with all aspects of the challenges our community faces. All participants in these discussions concluded that to achieve this we must have a strong and active membership at the workplace level.

Our afternoon activity was a bit more physical! Members participated in a 'Race around SA' taking on all sorts of creative and physical tasks in a bid to find creative solutions to meet our challenges head on. It didn't hurt that there were also some great prizes to be won!

As always, it was inspiring to hear ASU members' ideas and see their commitment and compassion for all of the challenges we encounter. The key element of the Conference's success was the confirmation that with ASU Workplace Reps and active members working together in their own workplaces and across industries and communities, we are better placed to positively deal with issues in our workplaces, industries and our community.

Once again, our conference was very generously supported by our sponsors – Members Equity Bank; HESTA Super; Local Super; Statewide Superannuation Trust; Local Government Risk Services; Industry Fund Financial Planning; ACTU Member Connect; and ASU Shop. We thank them for their ongoing support and urge members to contact them to find out how their services and products can assist.

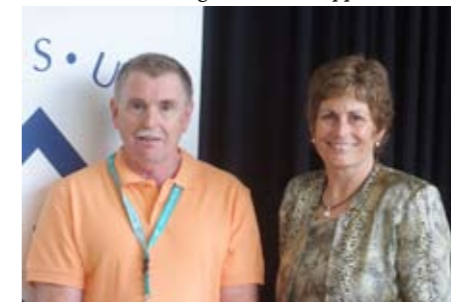
Thank you to all Workplace Reps and active members who participated on the day. We look forward to a bigger and better 2009 Conference!



Branch Secretary Andy Dennard with Monsignor David Cappo AO



Dr Lynn Arnold



Adelaide Council Workplace Rep Steve Mitchell with Dr Leanna Read



The Hon Gail Gago with ETSA Workplace Rep Wendy Leech



President Pam Andritsakis with the Hon Jay Weatherill



Branch Secretary Andy Dennard with the Hon Paul Caica



Wendy Campana with Adelaide Council Workplace Rep Roxanne Withers



Branch Assistant Secretary and conference organiser Katrine Hildyard



Generous prizes donated by Members Equity. Prize winners with ME's Tom Gale



Workplace Reps, Active Members, Branch Executive, Councillors, and ASU staff

As 2008 drew to a close and Governments, industries and communities considered the potential impact of global economic uncertainty and climate change, ASU members considered the environmental, social and economic challenges we face as South Australians.

Late November 2008 saw over eighty ASU Workplace Reps, active members, Branch Executive, Branch Councillors and staff come together once more at the ASU SA + NT Branch Workplace Reps and Active Members Conference to focus and plan for your Union's future.

We were honoured to be joined by seven prominent South Australians who discussed the challenges we face, considered the interconnectedness of the issues and reinforced the need for collaborative and creative solutions across sectors and disciplines.

Our first three key note speakers each covered a topic of impact for us all in our communities, lives and workplaces. We heard about the social, economic and environmental challenges facing all South Australians today and in the future.

On social challenges we were addressed by Monsignor David Cappo AO, SA Social Inclusion Board Chair and Commissioner for Social Inclusion. Dr Leanna Read, South Australian Economic Development Board Member and TGR BioSciences CEO and Founder took us through the key SA economic challenges and the Hon Jay Weatherill, Minister for Environment and

Conservation outlined the environmental realities of living in South Australia and the broader context of climate change.

While it is clear that the issues we face are complex and often affected by national and international issues, our relatively small population affords South Australians excellent opportunities to readily connect and work together towards sustainable solutions.

After morning tea members turned their minds to how broader challenges will impact in the short and long term upon the industries in which ASU members work. The following keynote speakers again addressed pertinent and timely issues.

Wendy Campana, the Local Government Association of SA Executive Director spoke about the challenges facing Local Government. Hon Gail Gago, Minister for State/Local Government Relations, Status of Women, Consumer Affairs and Government Enterprises addressed the challenges facing women in our industries. Dr Lynn Arnold, Anglicare SA CEO, Former South Australian Premier and Former CEO of World Vision Australia Hon spoke about strengthening the community Sector and The Hon Paul Caica,



Long Overdue!



Paid maternity leave is a fundamental human right that should be provided to all mothers. It will benefit mothers, family, the economy and business.

The ACTU has called for paid maternity leave to become a new national employment standard after the Productivity Commission hands down its findings in February 2009 and to put it in the May 2009 Budget. After 30 years of campaigning, we hope that Australian women are finally about to win a universal paid maternity leave scheme. In September, after months of considering submissions and evidence from women themselves, the Productivity Commission released a model for a proposed 18 week scheme.

The Productivity Commission's Proposed Model

- Paid leave funded primarily by the federal government at minimum wage rates (\$543.78 per week); will be taxed.
- Employers to continue paying 9% superannuation on the paid leave.
- Available to all working mothers who have worked at least 10 hours a week on average over the previous 12 months, with the same or various employers.
- 18 weeks to be taken after any other paid maternity leave provided by the employer.
- 18 weeks must begin within 6 months of the birth of the baby.
- 18 weeks not available before the birth.
- 18 weeks cannot be taken at half pay.
- 18 week payment not available to 'stay at home' mothers who will continue to receive the baby bonus and Family Tax Benefit Part B (a lesser amount).
- 2 weeks paid paternity leave.

The proposed scheme is a good start but it isn't perfect. In the next round of consultations with the Productivity Commission, Unions want to see some fine tuning as follows:

- A requirement that employers 'top up' the government's paid leave to make sure women earning above the minimum wage receive full income replacement.
- Flexibility on the qualifying period. Some women may have been working for 12 months or more but their hours might fall slightly short because of unavoidable gaps between shifts or jobs, particularly if they are casual employees.
- Flexibility on when mums can take the 18 weeks leave.
- Flexibility to allow women to take some of the 18 weeks paid leave before the birth of the baby.
- Allow women the choice of taking 18 weeks paid leave at half pay over 36 weeks.
- Offer an equivalent payment to 'stay at home' mums, who would receive substantially less under this proposed model.

What can I do?

- Make your voice heard by calling into your local talkback show or write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about this issue.
- Get involved in public events promoting a paid maternity leave scheme.
- Talk with your work colleagues and family and friends about the need for a paid maternity leave scheme.
- Contact the Union Hotline on 1300 362 223 if you are experiencing problems at work.
- Visit the ACTU website at www.actu.asn.au/ and click on the **Mum's Rights at Work** link and download some campaign material to distribute at your workplace.
- Participate in the SA Unions **'Paid Maternity Leave performance'** during the Fringe Parade on 27 February. If you are pregnant, willing to dress as a pregnant woman or push a pusher in the parade, please contact Janet at SA Unions on 8279 2222



Senators Anne McEwen and Dana Wortley (on behalf of the federal government) receiving thousands of postcards from South Australians asking for paid maternity leave in the upcoming federal budget

“The proposed scheme is a good start but it isn't perfect.”

Community Services Workers! Help Build A Strong Community and a Healthy State Today!

Your Strong Community Healthy State campaign and your national campaigns to address urgent workforce issues threatening your sector's ability to provide high quality services to vulnerable South Australians into the future continue.

Have your say on the need for additional funding for wage increases by signing a letter in support of your campaign for delivery to State Government over the next couple of months.

For more details on your campaign and to download a copy of the letter visit your ASU website at www.asu-sant.asn.au/campaigns

and look for the link to Help build a Strong Community Healthy State today!

ASU Community Services Health and Safety Representative Education Helping to Build a Safe and Healthy Community Sector

We are excited that as part of our Safe Workplaces, Healthy Community - Building Community Sector Health and Safety Project, community sector specific, SafeWork SA approved Health and Safety Representative (HSR) training will be available throughout 2009.

Level 1 HSR Training is for HSRs in their first year and Level 2 HSR Training is for HSRs with more experience in the second or subsequent years of their role. This training will provide HSRs with the skills and knowledge needed for their role and the issues, practices and structures explored will be presented in a community sector context.

There are a number of resourcing issues for community sector organisations and workers which can sometimes mean it is difficult for HSRs in the community sector to attend training. Through our Project we are able to assist organisations with the cost of this training for workers employed in areas of ASU coverage.

This training is an important step for the ASU in strengthening the health and safety structures in the community sector.

For more information, contact Lee-Anne Woods at the ASU Office.

See page 12 - ASU Education for dates



SCOSA ASU Workplace Reps (WPR) (L to R): Clare Dole, ASU Industrial Team Leader Fay Donaghy, ASU Community Services Organiser Mel Calone and SCOSA ASU WPR's Chris Woodward, Sharon Bain and Eric Hobby

SCOSA Members Due to Sign Collective Agreement

In June last year we reported that ASU members at SCOSA had been successful in working together to get rid of Australian Workplace Agreement individual contracts and move to collective bargaining. After months of work, we are pleased to report that at the time of going to print the final collective agreement was being considered by SCOSA staff. It is due to be voted on on 2 March and it is expected it will be registered shortly after.

During the bargaining process ASU membership has grown and a number of members have taken on the role of ASU Rep; this has been crucial in delivering improved outcomes to staff through the collective bargaining process.

Congratulations to all members at SCOSA!

First Meeting for 2009 of Active Members in Community Sector

2009 is shaping up to be an exciting and challenging year for the community sector across the country. Our first active member network meeting will be held from 5.30pm to 7.00pm on Thursday 12 March 2009 at your ASU Office.

ASU branches around the country are ready to work together towards a national plan to strengthen the sector into the future. Come along and hear more about how you can be involved nationally and the progress with your Strong Community Healthy State Strong Community Healthy Territory and national campaigns.

Please RSVP to Gail Dean on 8363 1322 or at gdean@asu-sant.asn.au by Tuesday 10 March.

active union union active



(local government)

Collective Agreement finally in place at Holdfast Bay

In November 2008, after over eighteen months of work by ASU members at Holdfast Bay, a BBQ was held to celebrate (finally) the making of a new collective agreement.



Led by ASU Reps Bev Walsh, Don McInnes and Matt Blowes, members worked hard together at their workplace and in their community to ensure that their wages and conditions were not diminished by *Work Choices*. Long term active ASU Rep Don McInnes says of the experience:

"The ASU Reps had a single objective - to facilitate the wishes of their fellow workers. The keys to the success we had were:

1. High ASU membership.
2. Good, old fashioned solidarity, a continuous source of inspiration to the Reps – that is what kept us going.
3. The highest level of support from our Union; from the personal intervention of ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence to our Organiser.

At Holdfast Bay, we will be forever grateful to the ASU, they did not hold back on any resources we needed; whether it was talking to staff or legal representation in the Industrial Relations Commission.

Help refresh your ASU's Local Government Plan for the future

A forum for all ASU members working in Local Government will be held from 3.00pm to 7.00pm on 7 April at your ASU Office, 5 – 9 Rundle Street, Kent Town.

The purpose of the forum is to review and refresh your Union's plan to build sustainable, fair and vibrant Local Government into the future. We want to hear from members in Local Government about –

- what you see as key issues and challenges experienced by workers in Local Government and facing the industry as whole;
- who you see as the key networks and stakeholders;
- what wages and conditions standards you would like to see across the industry;
- what makes Local Government an attractive place to work; and
- how you would like to see your ASU involved in the industry during 2009 and beyond.

Your help would be greatly appreciated. A light dinner will be provided. Please RSVP to Gail Dean on 8363 1322 or at gdean@asu-sant.asn.au by 3 April 2009.

For further information, please contact Katrine Hildyard at your ASU Office. We look forward to seeing you there.

To download a flyer or registration form visit www.asu-sant.asn.au/events

(northern territory)

Securing and improving wages and conditions in NT after Local Government 'reform'

Despite Local Government employees in the Northern Territory being given numerous assurances that their conditions of employment would be quarantined from disadvantage as a consequence of council amalgamations/'reform' and the introduction of the new shires, ASU members have been experiencing a number of issues.

A member who had worked in a remote location in the NT for many years and attracted a district allowance as a result of this, had his allowance cut when he became employed by the new shire in July 2008. For around seven months the member lost \$50.21 from his wage every week. The member enlisted the help of his ASU office and this issue has now been resolved with the member being back paid to July last year.

Many ASU members are contacting their ASU office needing assistance on similar issues.

We will continue to support members on individual matters; we will also be working to address these issues across Local Government in order to ensure that standards of wages and conditions across the industry are maintained. To do so, your ASU is putting additional resources into the NT to focus on securing and improving wages and conditions across the shires and building a strong community sector for the future.

Organisers Alan Gardner and Lucio Matarazzo and your Branch leadership Andy Dennard and Katrine Hildyard will be visiting shires over the coming months to talk with workers, hear about issues in shires and build a strong membership able to secure collective agreements which maintain and deliver improvements in wages and conditions into the future.

At the time of going to print, visits were scheduled in Central Desert Shire, Barkly Shire and East Arnhem Shire. Others will be organised over the coming months.

We look forward to working with you in the shires during 2009 and beyond.



MOVED HOUSE?
CHANGED EMAIL OR PHONE?
PLEASE, LET US KNOW!

membership@asu-sant.asn.au

(introducing)

Alan Gardner NT Organiser

I have been a Union Organiser for more than 25 years. I started my Union career in New Zealand (NZ) working for both the NZ Amalgamated Workers Union and then the NZ Engineering Printing and Manufacturing Workers Union. Prior to being a Union Organiser I was a fitter and turner.



I moved to Australia about 18 months ago and initially worked as an Industrial Advocate for the Finance Sector Union in Sydney and with the Community and Public Sector Union in Darwin.

I came to the ASU to utilise all of my skills and knowledge in all areas of Trade Unionism. I am looking forward to organising workplaces with ASU members so we can achieve great collective outcomes and finally put to rest *Work Choices* and individual contracts. I want to be able to promote the need to belong to a strong Trade Union which has principles that deliver real benefits to ASU members and the sectors they work in and will commit itself to providing ASU members in the NT with quality outcomes and advice on all areas of employment. I look forward to being able to work with people to achieve a work environment that protects their rights at work.

I am looking forward to working with Lucio as part of the ASU team and providing a greater ASU presence for existing and new members in the Territory.

(invitation)

ASU Member Footy Tipping

Welcome to the inaugural ASU Footy Tips! Whether you are a Power or Crows fan, the Magpies, Kangaroos or Hawks are more your thing, or if you are a novice when it comes to football and tipping, you can put your skills to the test against other ASU members.

This season is shaping up as a big one and we want Team ASU members to get involved. To enter and view full competition details, visit your ASU website at www.asu-sant.asn.au/links - ASU Footy Tipping; you could be in line to win great prizes including \$200 kindly donated by Members Equity Bank, an iPod and ASU packs.

It's easy and free for ASU members to participate. Thank you to Members Equity Bank for their support.



(invitation)

Worried about global economic uncertainty? Free Forum for ASU Members

Wanting to know more about the potential effect of financial uncertainty on your super, job security and interest rates into the future? Need expert advice and more information on finance products and managing your money? As part of a series of ongoing seminars for all ASU members on current issues we invite you to attend our upcoming member seminar on

Considering your Finance – Money Matters in the Current Climate
6.00 to 8.00pm 17 March 2009 ASU Office 5 – 9 Rundle Street Kent Town

Speakers: Jim Hancock - Deputy Director South Australian Centre for Economic Studies and ASU Branch Councillor
Ray Bailey - Industry Fund Financial Planning
David Lang - Manager - Members Equity Bank
Representatives - Industry Super Funds

Light refreshments served. Please RSVP to Gail Dean gdean@asu-sant.asn.au or 8363 1322



(energy)

Securing Super in the Energy Industry

ASU lawyers and Branch Secretary Andrew Dennard recently met with Energy Industry Super Scheme (EISS) lawyers and Executive Officer Jon Holbrook to discuss the disadvantage suffered by some existing and potential Division 3 pension recipients as a result of moving from a taxed to an untaxed scheme at the time of ETSA privatisation.

The meeting did not resolve the underlying issue of whether employer costs had actually been reduced as a result of the change from a taxed to an untaxed scheme. In fact it became apparent that it may be almost impossible to definitively demonstrate this one way or another.

The meeting did however produce the following agreement as to process:

- The discretion of the Board to allow Division 3 members to opt for the untaxed option will be offered as a matter of course as long as the law allows the Scheme to do this. This includes allowing those that have already taken the taxed option to revert to an untaxed option as far as future pension entitlements are concerned.
- EISS will review the case studies provided which demonstrate the potential disadvantage suffered to at least assess whether they agree with our calculations/ conclusions.
- EISS will review their position that there has been no demonstration of a reduction in employer costs.
- The Board will not take an overly technical approach to members taking 'Clause 12' appeals to the Board. It was noted that if members were dissatisfied, complaints could be taken to the Superannuation Complaints Tribunal, subject of course to the tribunal accepting they had jurisdiction to consider complaints (which has been a problem in respect to some pre-existing issues).

For more information please email Andy Dennard at your ASU Office on adennard@asu-sant.asn.au

Winds of Change in Energy

As South Australia and Australia grapple with serious climate change and water issues, the energy industry, Governments and community are increasingly looking to explore and establish alternate energy providers.

The ASU is beginning to talk with workers in a number of new organisations. Organiser Matt Blowes recently visited workers at Suzlon Power at Hallett (a wind farm) where a number of workers joined their Union the ASU.

Visits will continue throughout 2009. The ASU will stay abreast of developments in the industry and looks forward to positively collaborating to meet the challenges ahead.



ASU Workplace Reps (L to R): Bob Belcher, ETSA, Wendy Leech, ETSA, Ian Kinlough, AGL with ASU Energy Organiser Matt Blowes

(indigenous organisations)

ASU Working with Indigenous Organisations to Strengthen the Community Sector

Your ASU continues to work in partnership with the Liquor Hospitality Miscellaneous Union, employers and peak bodies on the Strong Community Healthy State campaign to build a strong community sector able to deliver high quality services into the future. Increasingly, it is also working at a national level to ensure Federal Government's attention is also turned to respecting and valuing the sector at a national level in order to address the urgent workforce issues the sector faces.

It is imperative that the whole sector works together to ensure the sector's future is vibrant and secure and focused on meeting increasingly complex need in our community in the long term.

We are currently working with the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement in SA to bring indigenous organisations together to discuss work to date, shape our work in the federal arena and ensure we are effectively collaborating as we move forward.

The forum will be held from 3.00pm to 5.00pm at the ASU Office on 26 March; information will be provided directly to all SA indigenous organizations over the coming weeks. We hope to undertake a similar initiative in the Northern Territory in 2009.

Progressive Labour Education Association (PLEA) 2009 Programme

The Progressive Labour Education Association (PLEA) runs a four week education programme to increase young people's understanding of -

- current issues facing South Australia;
- the role of progressive organizations including Unions, social and environmental organizations;
- the history of the progressive movement;
- politics, political theory and campaigning;
- the workings of the ALP, labour movement and the broader progressive movement; and
- judiciary in the industrial context.

Branch Secretary Andy Dennard and Assistant Secretary Katrine Hildyard are on the management committee of the Association and involved in organising this year's programme which has been running during late January and February.

Participants heard a number of high profile guest speakers over the first week. In the second, participants were given an opportunity to see many of the theories they had heard put into practice through work experience at a number of Unions including the Liquor Hospitality Miscellaneous Union (LHMU), ASU, Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) and the United Firefighters Union (UFU) and at community organisations including SACOSS and the Youth Affairs Council. Participants have enjoyed visiting workplaces with Union Organisers to see firsthand how they communicate with members and potential members. In the third and fourth weeks participants will be working with various parliamentarians.

The Programme includes a Canberra trip where they will tour Old Parliament House, see Question Time and meet members of Federal Parliament.

In summary, a great deal of time and effort has been committed by the Programme Directors and this has been reflected in the quality and value to participants of the Programme. PLEA 2009 participants - Scott Cowen, Robert Fletcher, Mathew Deane, Melissa Westbrook, Satchi Riehl and Bahar Salehi - would like to take this opportunity to thank Programme Directors and everyone involved for their effort and have no doubt that the knowledge and experience gained will be put to good use in the future.

Bahar Salehi and Satchi Riehl
2009 PLEA Programme Participants

(industrial matters)

Long Service Leave ASU Wins on Entitlements

As a result of the ASU office following up from a member's query regarding her long service leave, the ASU member nearly tripled her long service leave entitlement!

Calculation of long service leave entitlement can be complicated, especially where casuals take leave without pay or where employees do not work a consistent number of hours each week. When hours are varied the entitlement is based on the average number of hours worked over the previous three years. Where leave without pay has been taken the period of leave is excluded from the average formula.

The ASU has found that for casual or part-time employees working variable hours, it has not been uncommon for employers to operate on a running calculation of long service leave entitlement based on the hours worked in each year.

This was one of the problems with the case we are referring to because when the employee started she was working less hours than she had been over the most recent three years. Instead of operating on the 'running total', the employer should have worked out the entitlement by multiplying the number of years the employee had been working, by the number of hours worked on average over the previous three years of 'service'. Because she had taken some unpaid leave three years 'service' was more than just the previous three calendar years.

Complicated we know - and it is complicated for payroll officers as well! If you have any queries regarding your long service leave entitlement please do not hesitate to call your ASU office for clarification.



2009 PLEA participants (L to R): Scott Cowen and Melissa Westbrook visit ASU Workplace Reps at City of Charles Sturt Laurie McCann, Rachele Streich, David Irvin and Sara during the PLEA Programme.

Member Benefits Did you know?

ASU Members have access to a range of services, benefits and specials. As a member you are eligible for

- Discounted movie tickets ⇨
- Great banking products
- Financial advice
- Discount cars
- Union Shopper and much more!

Visit www.asu-sant.asn.au/links
to find out more about your Member Benefits
or call 08 8363 1322



ASU Discounted movie tickets
Now available from the ASUshop
visit www.asushop.asn.au

For discount movie ticket inquiries, call the **ASUshop** on 03 9342 1400

ASU education

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT...

- building an active Union at work
 - your rights at work
 - what an ASU Workplace Rep does
 - how to be an effective Workplace Rep
 - collective bargaining
 - occupational health, safety and welfare
 - campaigning for improvements in your workplace and across your industry
 - dealing with conflict
 - how you can play an active role in YOUR Union the ASU
- then ... come to ASU education!

ASU education is fun, informative and friendly. You get to meet members from other areas of your Union, share experiences and learn new skills and ways of involving your work mates in workplace and industry issues and strategies.

Your ASU Office can run any special course which would be useful to you and other ASU members at your workplace or in your industry.

Our scheduled education to date for 2009 is as follows:

Workplace Reps Stage 1

3 - 5 March
15 - 17 June
19 - 21 October

Bargaining in Your Workplace

10 - 11 March

Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare in the Community Sector

Level 1 23 - 25 February and 30 - 31 March
Level 2 11 - 13 March and 27 - 28 April
Level 1 20 - 22 July and 20 - 21 August
(see details page 7)

For more information or a registration form, speak with your ASU Organiser or contact Vashti Riddiford on 8363 1322 or at vriddiford@asu-sant.asn.au

ASU UNION events

5 March *International Women's Day March*

Meet at Victoria Square at 5.00pm and march to the Brecknock Hotel Garden (corner King William and Gilbert) for speeches, music, socialising and a cool drink

6 March *UNIFEM International Women's Day Breakfast*

6.30am for 7.00am, Adelaide Convention Centre, North Terrace
Please contact Katrine at the ASU office on 8363 1322 if you would like to be part of an ASU table

12 March *Community Services Active Members Meeting*

7.00pm on Thursday ASU Office 5 - 9 Rundle Street Kent Town

17 March *Finance Seminar - Free to ASU Members*

Considering your Finance - Money Matters in the Current Climate
6.00 to 8.00pm ASU Office 5 - 9 Rundle Street Kent Town
Guest speakers, light refreshment. RSVP Gail Dean gdean@asu-sant.asn.au

26 March *Strong Communities, Healthy State Indigenous Organisations Forum*

3.00 to 5.00 pm ASU Office 5 - 9 Rundle Street Kent Town
See details page 10

7 April *Local Government Forum*

A forum for all ASU members working in Local Government (see page 8)
3.00pm to 7.00pm ASU Office 5 - 9 Rundle Street, Kent Town.
RSVP to Gail Dean on 8363 1322 or at gdean@asu-sant.asn.au 3/4/09

25 May to 5 June *Anna Stewart Memorial Project*

Two week Union programme for women Union members
Please let Katrine or your Organiser know if you are interested in participating or would like more information

30 May *Terri Daktyl APHEDA - Union Aid Abroad Dinner*

Please mark the date in your diary; further information to be provided
For enquiries call Jan or Jude 8363 1322

For further information, registration forms or information on bookings, please contact your ASU office 08 8363 1322 or union@asu-sant.asn.au

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