



# Community matters

Newsletter of the Australian Services Union SA & NT Branch Community Services Division  
JUNE 2006

## JOIN US - IT'S ABOUT YOUR FUTURE

Your December issue of *Community Matters* outlined how your Union the ASU is playing a key role in finding a way forward on the many issues that you face as community services workers. ASU members around the state are continuing to work together to address issues like low wages, increased responsibilities and regulation, competition for scarce resources and the difficulties you face in balancing these issues with your admirable commitment to the clients you serve.

Your Union continues to work together with the Liquor Hospitality Miscellaneous Workers Union (LHMU), SACOSS and employer groups including AMCO to get broad agreement around reform in your sector. The group is committed to developing an industry wide agreement which will include wage increases and protections against the Howard Government's attacks on rights at work (please see overleaf for more details).

Unless we build power in the sector to pressure the State Government for funding for wage increases we will not achieve them. Unless we work together in the long term as a strong, powerful and relevant Union we will not be able to achieve long-term reforms and additional wage increases in your sector.

**It is now time for you to get involved and there are some exciting ways for you to do so:**

**At 5.30pm on Wednesday 7 June 2006** active ASU community services members will be meeting at the ASU Office to discuss how they will intensify their lobbying efforts, their campaign launch later this year and their key campaign message.

Marketing expert Alison Dunn will be attending the meeting to work with members on their message and details of their launch.

**It's your campaign, it's your sector,  
it's your future, IT'S TIME!**

Snacks and drinks will be available and one of our key objectives will be to have fun!!!

Please confirm your attendance by telephoning Gail Dean on 8363 1322 or emailing Gail on [gdean@asu-sant.asn.au](mailto:gdean@asu-sant.asn.au)



## The Campaign to Secure Your Rights at Work in Community Services Continues

### A Message from your ASU Branch Secretary Andy Dennard and Branch Assistant Secretary Katrine Hildyard

By now most of you would have received our advice that it is imperative that, in light of the Howard Government's IR changes and their ability to reduce your entitlements, we continue to work together to build power in your workplaces to deal with the issues and across your sector to secure long-term reforms.

The Howard Government's IR legislation includes

- Removal of employment conditions from Awards
- Lowering of minimum wages
- Removal of unfair dismissal protection for the majority of Australian workers
- Making bargaining harder and keeping Union Organisers out of your workplace
- Reducing the power of the independent Industrial Relations Commission to settle disputes and set fair minimum standards at work
- Promoting secret individual contracts and tying funding to organisations compulsorily offering individual contracts to workers

We understand that a number of non government community service organisations have been advised by their employer groups that they are trading corporations and therefore have to apply the Howard Government's new laws to their employees.

The ASU position based on our advice is that firstly many community service organisations would **not** be considered to be trading corporations and would **not** be bound by the new laws and secondly **no** employer is required to use the new legislation.

**New information has also come to light** which further questions whether not-for-profit community service organisations would be found to be trading corporations; if they are not found to be trading corporations then the new laws do not apply.

In its own submissions to the High Court on 11 May 2006 the Commonwealth Government cast grave doubt on whether any not-for profit community organisations could be brought under the new laws by asserting through the Commonwealth Solicitor General that charities, hospitals, schools and the like would probably not be trading corporations. For example it was specifically stated that the Salvation Army and the Red Cross would be unlikely to be trading corporations. If the Commonwealth Government is correct in this view it is difficult to see whether any not-for-profit community service organisations could be considered trading corporations.

There is no doubt that there is currently confusion about which industrial instruments to use. We would therefore advise that it is very important that we continue to negotiate as we always have, that we do not panic and that we simply find out what issues workers care about, build power in the workplace to deal with them and negotiate these issues with your employer and across your sector. Your Union will continue to work with you to ensure your current award and agreement provisions are secure and any new issues you negotiate are put into an appropriate form of agreement.

Your Union is supporting an industry forum which the Minister for Family and Community Services will address to ensure there is positive dialogue about the issues at hand and some principles developed around dealing with the new legislation in the community sector.

Act with confidence in undertaking what we as Union know is a fair and reasonable approach to negotiating your issues. It is an approach which truly allows you as members to negotiate your issues rather than being dictated to by laws which are designed to reduce your entitlements. Keep in touch with your ASU Office and remember that by being active, strong and united we can secure and improve your rights at work. Get involved in the broad community campaign in the lead up to the next Federal election and come along to one of the events in the week of activities (please see details below).



In solidarity  
Andy and Katrine

#### June Week of Activities for Your Rights at Work

##### **Monday 26 June - SA Delegates/Reps Meeting – 12.30pm to 2.30pm at Adelaide Town Hall**

Greg Combet will be addressing a meeting of delegates from all South Australian Unions about campaigning towards the next election and the Union vision for the future of industrial relations. Please telephone Gail Dean at the ASU Office for a registration form

##### **Tuesday 27 June - Ecumenical Church Service – 6.00pm**

This service will be about uniting communities across Adelaide in a service for fair work. It will be held at St Peter's Anglican Cathedral in North Adelaide.

##### **Wednesday 28 June - Community Rallies**

Community rallies around Adelaide will target the three key marginal seats that we need to win the next Federal Election.

- Kingston Rally - Kym Richardson's Office, 209 South Road, Morphett Vale at 7.30am
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- Makin Rally - Trish Draper's Office, 959 North East Road, Modbury at 10.00am
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- City Rally - Victoria Square at 12.30pm
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- Wakefield Rally - David Fawcett's Office, 10 Adelaide Road, Gawler at 12noon

##### **Regional Activities**

Activities in regional areas are being organised; details will be forwarded to you. If you have any ideas about how regional activists could participate please feel free to get in touch.