

Winter 2026



Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union
Journal

**Our call for
industrial
justice** pg6

**AMWU drives
Australia's first
EV Skills Summit** pg16

NO WORKER BELOW MINIMUM WAGE pg10 | **WORKERS UNITE TO DEFEND LIBERTY BELL BAY** pg22

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The AMWU Helpdesk is a free, confidential
service for AMWU members seeking help with
workplace issues. It provides assistance with
questions, problems, and access to legal advice.



AMWU Care is a 100% free and confidential
phone counselling service for AMWU members
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The AMWU acknowledges the Traditional
Custodians of the lands and waterways. We
pay respect to Elders and leaders, and stand in
solidarity in the ongoing struggle for justice and
self-determination.

Authorised by Steve Murphy
AMWU National Secretary, 2026



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“The workers’ struggle is for SOCIAL GOOD

Take a look at your hands. Whether you’re on a lathe, in a lab, on the production line, or maintaining machinery, those hands keep Australia running.

We are the makers, the fixers, and the problem solvers. We put food on the tables and keep the wheels of the economy turning.

But as we stand at the threshold of a new industrial era, we cannot be content to maintain the status quo. A transition this massive demands audacious leadership, with the great ambition and vision to push the envelope. We have an obligation to step forward with a bold, long-term vision that proves our unshakable belief: the struggle of the workers is essential to the good of every Australian.

The AMWU didn’t get this far by playing nice with bosses who don’t respect us. We got here by being “mindfully militant”. That means we’re smart, strategic and disciplined — and never, ever afraid to fight when our dignity is on the line.

Over the last 12 months, our delegates and leaders have been listening to you. But a vision is nothing if it is dictated from the top down. True union power means bringing workers with us. Deploying a strategy that allows the rank-and-file members to lead the struggle and truly own the victories. Your shop floor stories and ideas have been forged into a new, fighting strategy: Our Union Blueprint for Action.

This is your battle plan to build unbeatable power for our generation and the next.

We are organising to win back our rights that have been stripped away.

- **The right to strike:** If we need to stand up, we should be able to do it without asking for permission from a judge or a boss.
- **A secure affordable home:** For every worker to have a right to a roof over their head near where they work.
- **Fair taxes:** No more multinationals dodging their debt while we pay ours. That money belongs in our schools, our hospitals, and in building the industries of the future.

To win, we must do more than organise our own. We must also win the hearts and minds of the public. We need every Australian to understand that union victories do not end at the factory gates, they reshape society for the benefit of all.

When we fight for a “Future Made in Australia”, we are fighting for local jobs that sustain entire towns.

When we demand that public money be tied to a Secure Jobs Code, we are

ensuring that taxpayer dollars build a stable working class.

When we push for a right to secure affordable housing, it’s a union plan for workers to be able to live close to where they work.

And we know that building a strong, organised workforce is the most effective tool for social progress this country has. When the working class reclaims its power, everyone benefits from a more just, equitable nation.

We must also win the hearts and minds of the public.

The bosses will try to divide us. But whether you wear a hi-vis vest or a lab coat, we are one union. Our discipline in standing together is the only thing the bosses truly fear.

Our job now is to take this vision into every lunchroom and to every site gate. We need to remind our mates on the job that our union has a proud history, but also a plan for the future.

Every union-led struggle is a fight for something better — not just for workers, but for society as a whole. Every victory won on the job lifts standards, expands rights and moves Australia forward.

When we win, the community wins.

The road to 2032 will be met with resistance. The media will attack us. The boardrooms will resist us. The politicians will hesitate. But they don’t have what we have. We have a plan; we have a united, visionary leadership to clear the path; and most importantly, we have a workforce ready to take the reins of their own destiny.

We are campaigning to build a country where no child grows up in poverty, where every worker is treated with the respect they’ve earned, and where we all get a fair share of the wealth we create.

Be proud. Get involved. Lead the fight, own the victory. Together, we are unbeatable.

In solidarity,
STEVE MURPHY
AMWU National Secretary





Every right working people have today has been won through collective action. Safer workplaces, the eight-hour day, annual leave, redundancy pay and limits on child labour were not handed down through the generosity of governments or employers.

Our call for industrial justice

Workers organised, stood together and won them through collective pressure and industrial action. That is why employers and governments have spent decades trying to restrict the rights that make worker power possible.

Today, Australia's industrial laws are built around limiting and interfering in unions' ability to organise, bargain and strike effectively. Complex legal restrictions, barriers to workplace access and the threat of crippling fines are all designed to weaken workers' leverage and tilt bargaining power toward employers.

For the AMWU and the future of the trade union movement, that must change. Industrial rights are not privileges to be granted when convenient. They are fundamental democratic rights recognised internationally through the principles of the International Labour Organisation, affirmed by the International Court of Justice. Without them, workers are left isolated and vulnerable to exploitation.

THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

At the centre of the fight is the right to strike. Under Australia's current "protected action" system, workers face a labyrinth of red tape and legal hurdles before they can lawfully stop work. Secret ballots, notice periods and ministerial intervention all make it harder for workers to take collective action — while employers

retain enormous economic power through restructures, outsourcing and lockouts.

AMWU Victorian State President Mick Terry said the ability to organise industrial action remains essential to achieving fair outcomes.

"Even the possibility of taking industrial action can very much influence negotiations," Mick said. "A strike does not always need to happen; sometimes the capacity to organise one is enough to move talks forward. The right to strike is what balances the scales between workers and employers."

Without the right to withdraw labour collectively, employers hold all the power at the bargaining table. Bargaining therefore becomes little more than asking the boss nicely. A true right to strike is our most powerful weapon, and the AMWU will campaign for the removal of all legislation that restricts our ability to defend ourselves from the greed and violence of private capital.

ENDING THE WEAPON OF LOCKOUTS

Workers at WA Newspapers experienced the structural imbalance of Australia's industrial laws firsthand during recent negotiations.

After workers took a four-hour protected stoppage, the company responded by locking them out for 77 days. For 11 weeks, workers were left without wages or certainty while the dispute dragged on. AMWU Organiser Alan Lindsey said the experience exposed how heavily the current system favours employers.

"It's an unfair system," Alan said.

"Workers took limited industrial action and the company responded by starving them out."

The AMWU is campaigning for the outright abolition of punitive employer lockouts. Employer responses must remain proportional to worker action, rather than being used as economic punishment to break workers' resistance.

A DAY SHOULD MEAN A DAY

The union is also continuing its campaign to restore fairness to personal leave for shift workers.

Following the High Court's decision in the AMWU v Mondelez Australia case, personal leave for shift workers is effectively calculated in hours rather than actual rostered days. While the National Employment Standards provide for 10 days of personal leave, the decision means a "day" is treated as 7.6 hours — even for workers regularly rostered on 10- or 12-hour shifts.

In practice, this means many shift workers will only be paid 6 days of personal leave.

AMWU delegate Tony Robertson recently gave evidence at a parliamentary inquiry examining the issue and calling for reform.

AMWU Tasmanian State Secretary Jacob Batt said the principle is simple.

"A day should be a day for personal leave," Jacob said. "There's no reason why shift workers should be disadvantaged compared to people working Monday to Friday, nine to five."

THE RIGHT OF ENTRY

For workers in remote and offshore industries, even speaking to their union can be deliberately obstructed by management.

AMWU WA State Secretary Steve 'Macca' McCartney said right of entry laws on mine sites and offshore facilities are often used to make union access nearly impossible. At remote mine sites at Newman in the East Pilbara, union officials can spend entire days waiting under escort just to hold brief meetings with workers.

"You could be sitting in a carpark for 12 hours to do four meetings in a day," Macca said. "You drive hundreds of kilometres to site, wait to be escorted in, get half an hour with workers, then get taken back out again."

The restrictions become even more extreme offshore.

At facilities like Barrow Island off the Pilbara coast, union officials are expected to arrange and fund their own transport to offshore worksites — despite companies regularly transporting staff by helicopter. In practice, it can make workplace access almost impossible.

The AMWU argues that if unions have a legal duty to support members and investigate workplace issues, then employers must not be allowed to use logistical barriers to block access to remote workplaces. Freedom of association means every worker has the right to join, participate in and speak with their union whenever they need support, representation or advice.

At its core, industrial democracy means workers having real power in their workplaces — not just rights on paper.

The ability to organise, strike and collectively bargain is not extreme. It is the foundation of every major gain working people have ever achieved against the hoarding of wealth by the boss.

And if workers are going to win fair wages, safe jobs and dignity at work in the future, those rights must be defended, expanded and militantly exercised through workers' solidarity. ■



WHEN WORKERS REFUSE TO ACCEPT LESS



When workers at Solway Interlox walked off the job last August, many had never taken industrial action before. There were nerves and uncertainty, but there was also a deep, shared anger that management was trying to shortchange them.

The Sydney plant is Australia's only manufacturer of hydrogen peroxide, producing a chemical critical to mining and wastewater treatment. The work is highly skilled and technical, where safety is critical. Yet during bargaining, the Belgian corporate bosses showed contempt for that reality.

The company sought to wind back workers' long-standing conditions, including redundancy entitlements, while trying to bring in a lower paid tier for future employees. They also refused to address unfair provisions that failed to properly recognise the brutal impact of 12-hour shift work on personal leave calculations. For AMWU members, the message from management was simple: accept less.

Instead, the workers chose to fight.

After negotiations stalled, members overwhelmingly backed taking strike action. Because of the highly volatile nature of the chemical site, workers could not simply down tools and walk out the gate. To safely undertake a 24-hour stoppage, they had to meticulously shut the plant down into a safe, inoperable state. This complex procedure took days, and restarting operations required another intense process. From beginning to end, the workers executed a strategic approach that paralysed the company for a full week.

Management attempted legal threats through the Fair Work Commission, but failed. As bargaining dragged on, tensions boiled over when a massive safety issue exposed the company's negligence. A diesel fire backup pump, a critical system designed to fight fires during a power outage, failed entirely.

Workplace HSRs and external authorities intervened immediately, forcing management to shut down the entire site to repair the faulty equipment. This safety crisis became the turning point of the campaign.

The AMWU's members went on the offensive, escalating the dispute internationally through the European trade union movement to expose local management. Pressure on corporate headquarters increased, resulting in the Australian management and external HR consultants removed from negotiations, with new representatives flown in to restart talks.

The result of this total shift in power was immediate. At the very first meeting, the company capitulated and agreed to every single claim put forward by AMWU members. This included incorporating the Manufacturing Award into the enterprise bargaining agreement (EBA) for the first time.

This victory was about workers discovering the immense power they hold when they organise. Members who had never stood on a picket line before defended their conditions and built a lasting culture of defiance across the workshop floor.

The campaign also highlighted the vital role of trained, militant workplace safety leaders. Delegate and Health and Safety Representative (HSR) Luke Sleeman was later recognised as AMWU HSR of the Year for his relentless role in protecting his workmates from serious safety risks. At Solway, the workforce won a better agreement, and they broke through the bosses' arrogance and proved that when the rank-and-file are prepared to act, any employer can be forced to surrender. ■

HSR OF THE YEAR

Luke Sleeman

When Luke Sleeman walked into the control room at the Solway plant near Sydney Airport for his final shift, he suspected his workmates might have organised something small to mark the occasion.

THE POWER OF UNION TO CHANGE SAFETY

After all, during farewell drinks the night before, they'd all insisted he had to come in for one last day. Nobody would tell him why. Maybe kind words to recognise four years working across the plant as a level-seven control-room operator, supervisor and outside-area worker.

Instead, Luke walked into a room full of union flags, AMWU officials and a surprise that left him stunned.

His workmates had secretly nominated him for the AMWU's annual HSR of the Year Award — and after reviewing more than 60 nominations from across the country, the union's rank-and-file committee selected Luke as the winner.

"I'm actually quite shocked and humbled by it," Luke said after receiving the award. "It's really nice to get recognition. I didn't think I'd get this award, which is quite a shock."

But for Luke's workmates, the reason for the recognition was obvious.

The award wasn't just about one safety issue. It was about what it means to be a union delegate and HSR in a high-risk workplace: refusing to back down to management when workers' safety is on the line.

The incident that led to Luke's nomination centred on a failed diesel fire water pump — a piece of safety-critical equipment designed to keep firefighting systems operating during a power outage.

At a plant producing hydrogen peroxide, the risk was serious. Without a functioning backup pump, a power failure could leave the site without adequate firefighting capability.

When Luke raised concerns about the issue, management prioritised operational continuity over safety and were reluctant to act. But Luke knew the danger was too significant to ignore.

Drawing on the training and statutory powers available to him as an elected HSR, he issued a Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN), escalated the matter to SafeWork NSW, and kept pushing until the faulty system was repaired.

The result was more than just a maintenance fix. According to those who nominated him, Luke's actions helped drive a broader cultural shift across the site — wrestling control back toward HSR involvement, improving consultation around safety issues, and creating a more proactive workplace.

For AMWU National Secretary Steve Murphy, Luke's actions represent exactly why union health and safety representatives matter.

"Luke was nominated and celebrated by his workgroup here for what he did lifting safety," Steve said.

"But most importantly, not taking 'close enough is good enough' for an answer."

"By making sure that we're using all of those powers on the shop floor to look after people, you go home from work in the exact same state that you came to work."

Luke is quick to point out he didn't act alone. Like thousands of HSRs across the country, he relied on the confidence, knowledge and backing that comes from union training and collective support.

That support matters — especially in workplaces where raising safety concerns means clashing with bosses who put production deadlines ahead of human lives.

The AMWU's HSR network plays a critical role in ensuring workers not only understand their rights but have the confidence to enforce them. And Luke's story is a reminder that those rights are there for a reason.

Because when safety systems fail, it's workers who carry the risk.

Luke's persistence ensured a potentially catastrophic hazard was addressed before anyone got hurt. But just as importantly, it showed his workmates what strong union safety culture looks like in practice: workers looking out for each other, standing their ground, and refusing to compromise with the employer when lives are at stake.

For Luke, the award may have come as a surprise. For the workers alongside him every day, it was thoroughly deserved. ■

LUKE'S PERSISTENCE ENSURED A POTENTIALLY CATASTROPHIC HAZARD WAS ADDRESSED BEFORE ANYONE GOT HURT.

Did you know it remains completely legal for bosses to pay workers below the minimum wage?

No worker below minimum wage:

The battle for the value of manufacturing workers

Under current laws, employers are handed the ability to underpay apprentices, trainees, young workers and workers with disability. While these workers face the exact same soaring costs of rent, groceries, fuel and bills as every other worker, their pay slips reflect a system designed to provide cheap labour to business owners. In its submission to this year's Annual Wage Review, the AMWU is drawing a hard line. The union

is demanding the Fair Work Commission establish a single unbreakable wage floor. Age, disability, or training status must no longer be used by employers as an accounting strategy to divide the workers and undercut wages. Business executives defend these abysmal rates as the "cost" of training. This is a myth designed to hide a basic truth — apprentices perform productive and valuable labour for their employers from day

one. For the young worker, the reality is long hours on the tools while struggling to afford basic survival. This forces them to carry the burden of Australia's skills shortage while bosses reap the rewards of their labour. The stories of Tylan and Henry show what this looks like on the ground — and why young workers across manufacturing are demanding something better. ■

“Just because you are on junior rates does not mean your living expenses are at junior rates.”

APPRENTICE PROFILE

Henry Lim

At 22 years old, Henry Lim knows the transport industry is run by workers, but the profits are pocketed by private operators. A fourth-year heavy diesel mechanic apprentice at Busways and a newly elected AMWU delegate, Henry stepped up because he realised workers needed a strong voice. “Nobody else put their hand up, so I did,” he said. “And I haven’t looked back.” Henry took a major pay cut to learn his trade, but the reality inside the workshop was a stark lesson in exploitation. **Despite performing 95% of the duties of a qualified tradesperson, Henry was paid just 70% of the rate.** To bring home what a qualified mechanic earned in 32 hours, Henry had to sell 50 hours of his life across a six-day week to the company. As the transport industry shifted towards electric vehicles, employers moved to shape the transition in their favour, seeking to reap the benefits while pushing the costs onto workers. Henry and the AMWU demanded that workers not be left behind or forced to pay for their own upskilling.

He wanted to see the AMWU win nationally recognised, employer-funded EV training, ensuring workers controlled the skills of the future. “We need to be ready for where the industry’s heading,” he said. The power of union organisation on the job became undeniable when Busways services were privatised, a move designed to cut costs and squeeze the workforce. During bargaining for a new enterprise agreement, management attempted to introduce a two-tiered system, offering workers hired after January 2022 significantly worse pay and conditions for doing the exact same job. **This was the oldest trick in the bosses’ playbook — divide the workforce, pit new workers against old, and undermine collective strength. Workers refused to be divided.** They held firm, standing together until management backed down and scrapped the two-tier system. For Henry, the experience showed exactly what solidarity looks like in practice. The fight for a national minimum wage for all apprentices is the next phase in that same struggle against the greed of the bosses. ■



APPRENTICE PROFILE

Tylan Egan

At 20 years old, Tylan Egan had already learnt how tough the fight is for working people in Australia. Now a qualified boilermaker and a proud AMWU delegate, he completed his four-year apprenticeship in August last year — but navigating the hurdles thrown up by management was far harder than it should have been. Tylan started at the Austal shipyard in Perth’s Henderson Defence Precinct straight out of school at 16, earning a miserable \$13 an hour on the shop floor. After tax, he was bringing home roughly \$300 a week. While the company executed major contracts, Tylan was left with a brutal choice: “Do I want to go out and have fun, or do I want to eat for the week?” **While employers can pay junior rates based on age, landlords and supermarkets don’t offer age-based discounts.** “Just because you are on junior rates does not mean your living expenses are at junior rates,” Tylan said. Tylan stuck it out, but the majority of apprentices who started alongside him simply walked away from the trade.

“When civil construction was offering school leavers \$25 to \$30 an hour, it was hard to convince people to stay on \$13,” he said. While employers regularly warn about a skills crisis, their own greed is pricing the next generation out of the industry. Tylan saw that individual workers had no leverage, so five months before finishing his time, Tylan stepped up to be an AMWU delegate to organise his shop floor. **The company’s response was calculated.** The very week that Tylan qualified, and the exact same week Austal announced a multi-billion-dollar defence contract, management terminated his contract. **Apprentices not active in the union were kept on. It was a clear attempt to target a union representative and intimidate the rest of the workforce.** But management underestimated union solidarity. The AMWU mobilised the collective power of our membership and engaged political leverage, organising at the site gate and defending Tylan every step of the way. The AMWU secured Tylan a new role at Australian Submarine Corporation (ASC), under a strong, union-negotiated agreement with better wages and conditions. “It was less stressful and made me happier in life,” he said. ■

WHEN DETERMINED DELEGATES REFUSE TO BACK DOWN

When a critical piece of equipment at the printing plant for News Corp's Adelaide newspaper, The Advertiser, broke down for what felt like the millionth time, AMWU Father of the Chapel Luke Becker had had enough.

DELEGATE PROFILE

Luke Becker

Luke, who will mark 22 years at the plant this September, is a familiar figure on the shop floor — instantly recognisable by his bushy red beard and the AMWU cap he wears proudly every day.

After starting as a casual worker, he spent years loading trucks and feeding pallets, plates, ink and paper through the plant before moving into publishing, where newspapers are assembled, bundled and prepared for distribution.

"If you pick up the newspaper and it falls on the floor, I put it in," Luke laughed. "Or if something's missing, then that's probably our fault in the publishing room."

But behind the humour was growing frustration.

The ageing machines — known in the industry as 'stoecklins' — had long become a source of frustration on the shop floor. Named after the Swedish company that manufactures them, workers moved massive industrial paper reels weighing up to a tonne through the plant. Over time, the machines had been patched together with modified parts salvaged from other printing plants to remain compatible with upgrades to the wider publishing line — the system that feeds, prints and moves newsprint through the factory from reel to dispatch.

Workers relied on them every shift, but despite frequent breakdowns, lifting failures and worsening safety concerns, management remained reluctant to replace the ageing machines after investing heavily in upgrades to the plant.

For Luke, the AMWU's lead delegate at the South Australian plant, that simply wasn't acceptable. **What followed became a three-year campaign built on persistence, workplace organising and a refusal to let the issue quietly disappear** until Luke and his workmates got the safe equipment they deserved.

Although the plant technically had a fleet of

stoecklins, only three could reliably operate — and even those regularly failed.

Luke refused to let the issue disappear into another management meeting.

"I kept bringing it up. I raised it at every committee meeting and put it in the reports. I complained to my boss every chance that I could," he said.

Instead of accepting excuses, Luke and his workmates kept building pressure. They highlighted not only the safety risks, but also the hidden costs of constantly repairing failing equipment and the productivity losses caused by repeated breakdowns.

Luke said support from AMWU Organiser Kevin Ralph also played a critical role throughout the campaign.

"It helps me to do my job knowing that I've got a good organiser," he said. "It's handy to have someone outside the company to lean on."

Eventually, after more than a year of relentless advocacy, management conceded the machines needed replacing.

But the fight still was not over. Global shipping delays and supply chain hold-ups dragged the replacement process out for another two years. Throughout it all, Luke kept the pressure on — demanding updates, following up distributors and making sure the issue never disappeared from management's attention.

After three years of persistence, the new stoecklins finally arrived on the shop floor.

For Luke, the victory represented far more than new machinery. It was proof of what workers can achieve when delegates stay organised, workers stay united and no one gives up.

"The main reason to join [the union] is to be a part of change," Luke said. "If you're not happy in your workplace, you're not going to get there necessarily as an individual. You're only going to get there as a collective."

"That's what companies don't like. It's when workers organise, are on the same page, and are fighting for the same thing." ■

DELEGATE PROFILE

Matt Lambert

FROM INDUCTIONS TO INDUSTRIAL POWER

“When I sat in your seat 18 months ago, I was earning 10% less than I am now,” AMWU delegate Matt Lambert tells new workers during inductions over lunch at the Osborne Naval Shipyard in South Australia.

"But because we've got strong union membership on site, we've been able to win better wages and conditions through bargaining. Join us."

It's a conversation Matt has every fortnight. Whenever new workers arrive on site, delegates are there to explain what the union is, how it works and why membership matters.

"I tell them the union is there to advocate for their interests and make sure the company doesn't step out of line," Matt said. "As soon as you mention that 10% pay increase, people immediately understand the strength of collective action."

Matt takes pride in making those conversations personal. He remembers what it felt like arriving on site with little experience of unions himself.

“When I first started, I understood unions were important, but I didn't really know how they worked,” he said. “Now I can sit down face-to-face with new workers, answer questions, clear up misconceptions and explain how democratic the union is.”

Those conversations — backed by strong organising on the shop floor — helped drive a major growth in AMWU membership on site. Delegates worked together across the shipyard, covering sheds, training bays and workshops to make sure members always had someone approachable nearby. They would tag team; another delegate would have a follow up face-to-face conversation after the inductions done by Matt.

"We were visible everywhere," Matt said. "Workers knew who the delegates were and knew we'd be there for them."

Sometimes, recruitment happened naturally.

"The company was our biggest recruiter," he laughed. "Whenever management did something dodgy, workers would come looking for us asking, 'Who's the delegate in this shed?' And we'd sign them up on the spot."

That's how delegates at BAE significantly grew AMWU membership — growing from 300 members to almost 500. The growth shifted the balance of power on the ground.

After 14 months of bargaining, organising and rolling work stoppages, workers secured a 25% pay rise and significant back pay entitlements in an industry-leading agreement.

"People were keen to take action and not be left in the shed, so they sought us out to join up and take action with their mates," said Matt.

Matt's own union journey started the same way. Not long after joining the company, a call went out for delegates to represent workers during enterprise bargaining negotiations. Although still on probation, Matt stepped forward.

"I wanted to be part of something bigger," he said. "I wanted to stand up for the people around me."

What followed changed the course of his life.

"I went from not really knowing what a union was to representing hundreds of workers fighting for fair pay," Matt said. "It completely changed my outlook. I realised what workers can achieve when we stand together."

Since then, Matt has spoken at rallies and conferences, trained new delegates and has become the vice president of his local sub-branch, all while continuing to represent members on the shop floor.

"As much as I take pride in being a delegate, that's not where it stops," he said. "The union keeps backing me and pushing me to do the best I can to change as many lives as possible," Matt said.

For Matt, unionism is about more than bargaining every few years.

"The workers matter," he said. "Our interests matter. We matter to society. The biggest thing the union teaches you is that we have a voice — and we will be heard." ■

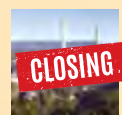
Workers

holding government to account

The shift to a lower-emissions economy is not an abstract policy experiment for the boardrooms of Canberra.



For AMWU members it is an immediate industrial reality currently unfolding across the manufacturing, power generators and regional supply chains that have sustained Australia for over a century.



Collie, WA
OCT 2027



Torrens Island, SA
JUNE 2028



Yallourn, VIC
JULY 2028



Gladstone, QLD
MAR 2029



Eraring, NSW
APR 2029



Muja, WA
OCT 2029

Coal and gas-fired power station closure timeline until 2029:

In 2022, the AMWU pushed the need for new jobs in our energy regions to the absolute forefront of the national political stage, framing it as an election-deciding issue for working people.

Our union forced explicit and binding political commitments from the incoming government that no worker would be left behind.

Today across the Latrobe Valley in Victoria, the Hunter Valley in New South Wales, Gladstone in Queensland, Collie in Western Australia and Torrens Island in South Australia, our members are watching long-standing industries wind down. We are here to make sure these political promises are delivered in full.

For our union, the debate over whether the transition will occur is over. The only question that matters now is whether the working class or the employer class dictates the terms.

In April, the AMWU's National Energy Transition Workers Group mobilised. Our delegates from across the country's key energy regions brought a unified, unyielding message — a transition left to the whims of the corporate free market is a direct threat to the survival of regional towns.

Following the meeting, our delegation marched directly into the halls of parliament. We went to collect on the commitments made to our movement. Our delegates put forward an AMWU pledge to politicians centred around two concrete demands:

- 1. Immediate capital allocation for ready projects:** the immediate removal of all roadblocks to the funding of the Magnium Australia's Magnesium Refinery and Green Steel WA's Steel Mill. These projects are fully scoped, worker approved and ready to anchor the industrial future of our members in Collie.
- 2. Real industrial power for the Net Zero Economy Authority (NZEA):** the federal government must ensure the NZEA is not reduced to a toothless consultative talk-shop for bureaucrats. The NZEA requires the legislative authority, robust public funding

and a strict mandate to directly steer capital investment into high skill permanent manufacturing operations in the regions hardest hit by closures.

Our delegates stand firm on our industrial position: capitalist "adjustment packages" and retraining programs are a hollow illusion on their own. Workers know that a support program can manage the administrative details of redundancy, but it cannot replace the security, pride and material stability of a well-paid union job. The best transition plan in the world means absolutely nothing if there are no factories left to transition into.

The battleground is the timeline.

Historically, governments and employers wait until the cooling towers go cold before they act, leaving communities to starve in the economic fallout. The AMWU demands that public investment and manufacturing development begin years before shutdowns occur. Climate action and job creation are not mutually exclusive — they are two sides of the same coin, and the government must fund both simultaneously.

Utilising the full strength of our national solidarity, the AMWU has designated Collie in Western Australia as our immediate priority, with the local coal-fired power station scheduled to close in October 2027.

The union will not allow this region to be kept in a holding pattern of economic anxiety while politicians delay decisions on its future. What we win in Collie will set the blueprint for every transitioning energy hub across Australia.

The AMWU's campaign for secure, union jobs in the transitioning energy sectors will only escalate.

Our demand is simple: the workers who built and powered this national economic wealth will not be discarded in the shift to a cleaner future.

A fair transition is not a matter of carbon targets or regulatory frameworks. It is a matter of whether working people retain the power, the jobs and the industrial future they are owed. ■



AMWU DRIVES AUSTRALIA'S FIRST **EV SKILLS SUMMIT**

In March, the AMWU made an important industrial intervention, bringing employers, training providers, regulators and governments from across the country into the same room for Australia's inaugural EV Skills Summit to shape the terms of the electric vehicle transition.

**THE TRANSITION MUST
CREATE SECURE,
SKILLED CAREERS FOR
WORKERS RATHER
THAN ALLOWING
COMPANIES TO
DESKILL THE TRADE.**



EV training has been treated as a regulatory wild west where bosses expect workers to figure it out on the fly. The AMWU has been pushing for a unified, national approach that recognises EV work as a specialised, highly hazardous skillset requiring proper training, strict licensing and increased pay.

That pressure reached the highest levels of government, forcing Federal Minister for Skills and Training Andrew Giles to haul regulators and industry bodies to the table to face the union's demands.

At the centre of the dispute was our simple expectation: workers must be properly compensated for the additional value they bring to the job, and we refuse to allow new technology to depress existing conditions.

The summit did not happen by accident. It was the result of sustained organising by the AMWU to force action on a growing threat: Australia's EV transition is accelerating, but without an organised response, employers will use a patchwork system to cut corners, lower standards, and exploit uncertified labour.

"The summit is about getting a national consensus on where the EV skills sit in industry and trying to actually make a decision nationally that these skills lie as additional skills for our tradespeople and our members," said AMWU National Skills & Training Coordinator Paul Baxter.

The union's position is non-negotiable. EV skills should not replace core trade qualifications or be shoehorned into apprenticeships as a source of cheap labour. They must be recognised as supplementary post-trade skills built on top of existing trades — and workers must be paid a higher rate for performing them. "EV skills are a good example where people have to upskill to do their job. Our position as a union is they need recognition of these skills and they need to be recognised financially," Paul said.

The need for action is urgent. Thousands of additional EV technicians will be needed within the decade, while apprenticeship completion rates continue to decline due to poverty wages.

"As it currently stands, between 4,000 to 10,000 new technicians will be required by 2030," said AMWU Assistant National Secretary Dave Henry. "This is coming at the same time as our apprenticeship numbers are declining and half of the apprentices in these trades are leaving before they finish their training."

Dave said the transition must create secure,

skilled careers for workers rather than allowing companies to deskill the trade or undermine existing agreements.

"We need to make sure that the training they do is delivering the fundamentals and that when it comes to the EV skills that they are bolted on," Dave said. "Our workers need career progression and they should be properly remunerated for the new skill sets that they bring to the work they do."

For the AMWU, the summit was about more than training alone. It was about ensuring Australia captures the full industrial opportunity of electrification by rebuilding a sovereign, state-backed manufacturing sector.

"The remaking of the Australian economy is partly built on us moving to electric vehicles away from traditional forms of transport," Dave said. "We currently aren't manufacturing vehicles and we need to have a vision about how we can get back to that."

"We have a great opportunity with products like lithium. We shouldn't just be shipping that stuff

overseas. We should be turning it into batteries going into electric vehicles, all done in Australia."

The EV Skills Summit marked the beginning of a long-term reform process, but it proves that when the union controls the agenda, the bosses will fall into line.

One of the most significant outcomes was forcing regulators, training providers and industry bodies to concede that EV skills must be classified as post-trade training rather than embedded into apprenticeships.

Paul said he had expected resistance from the employer lobby to want cheap diluted qualifications. Instead, the union's organised position delivered genuine consensus.

"We achieved something really good," he said.

As electrification reshapes the industry, the AMWU is making sure workers' skills, wages and futures are defended by the collective might of our organised labour. ■



**EV SKILLS SHOULD NOT REPLACE CORE TRADE
QUALIFICATIONS OR BE SHOEHORND INTO
APPRENTICESHIPS AS A SOURCE OF CHEAP LABOUR.**



NATIONAL DELEGATES' TRAINING DAY

AMWU delegates — the backbone of our union — gathered across the country for six National Delegates' Training Days unlike any before it.



This was a powerful assembly of the union's shop floor leadership. For the first time, delegates took hold of our Union Blueprint for Action — a bold and enduring agenda for working people that sets out the union's priorities across industrial rights, housing, manufacturing, education, energy transition and more.

The energy of this event belonged to our delegates, who dragged the words from the pages and grounded our Blueprint in the realities faced by working people every day. Through passionate discussion and raw debate, they shared workplace experiences and actively shaped how the AMWU will campaign on the issues that matter most to workers.

The Blueprint is built on decisions made at National Conference, the

AMWU's peak decision-making body, where rank-and-file members set the union's direction.

At its heart is a simple belief: every worker deserves dignity, security and a fair share of the wealth they help create. The Blueprint sets out the pathway. But it is the delegates who choose to lead the struggle to make it a reality.

AMWU National Secretary Steve Murphy travelled to every training day to present the Blueprint and urged delegates to turn it into something more than a document.

"You're the leaders who are going to bring this Blueprint, which is at the moment words on a page, into a movement and into action," Steve told delegates.

Through interactive polling and discussion, our delegates carved out their powerful agenda, dictating exactly which issues matter most to them.

The clearest response was industrial rights — the right to organise and take industrial action remains central to how delegates exercise their power at work.

But the conversations extended well beyond the workplace — proving the role of unions in destroying unjust conditions across all of society.

Secure and affordable housing emerged as a major concern, with one delegate describing the "gnawing anxiety" of not knowing whether retirement will bring stable housing.

Others spoke about our ambitious responsibilities to secure a future for generations to come.

"It's not all about me... it's about the younger generation and the subsequent generations of workers," one delegate said.

Looking ahead, delegates also pointed to the need for stronger manufacturing and more time outside of work.

"A shorter working week means more time spent with family, which is far more important than anything else in this world," one delegate said.

Steve reminded delegates that the Blueprint is ultimately about using collective power to improve people's lives.

"It's power to make sure that no child has to grow

up in Australia in poverty, to make sure that no worker has to go to a job where they are not respected and valued for the work that they do, and to make sure that the wealth of our country is shared with the workers who create it."

Across every state, delegates left not with just an understanding of the Blueprint — but with uncompromising ownership of it.

They drove the discussion, they own the campaigns, and they will lead our victories. Our delegates are united for action. ■

AT ITS HEART IS A SIMPLE BELIEF: EVERY WORKER DESERVES DIGNITY, SECURITY AND A FAIR SHARE OF THE WEALTH THEY HELP CREATE.



"Secure a better future for working class people."



NSW/ACT

"Treating us with respect and not as tools."

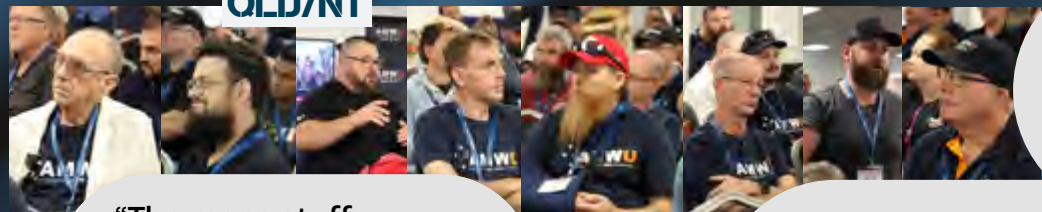
At National Delegates' Training Days across the country, AMWU delegates were asked two simple questions:

1. WHICH BLUEPRINT PRIORITIES MATTER MOST?
2. WHAT DIFFERENCE WOULD WINNING ON THEM MAKE?

Here's what they said.

THE VOICES OF OUR DELEGATES

QLD/NT



"The more stuff we manufacture the better off and more resilient we will all be."

"Balance of power back in the hands of workers instead of the corporations."

"The dignity of being able to afford basic roof over your head has been stolen from our young people."

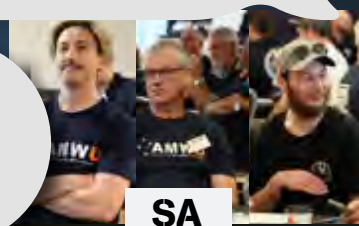
"My child would be able to buy their own home and I would be able to retire instead of working to help them afford to be able to live."

"Shorter working week means more time spent with family, which is far more important than anything else in this world."

"Sense of pride and dignity in myself, my work and community."

"To be able to live to work not work to live. To be able to spend more time with your family."

SA



Scan to read the AMWU's 2025 National Conference decisions



"Have a seat at the table with some real impact for change. Instead of being ignored and walked over."

"Stop the gnawing anxiety I have about lack of housing security in retirement."

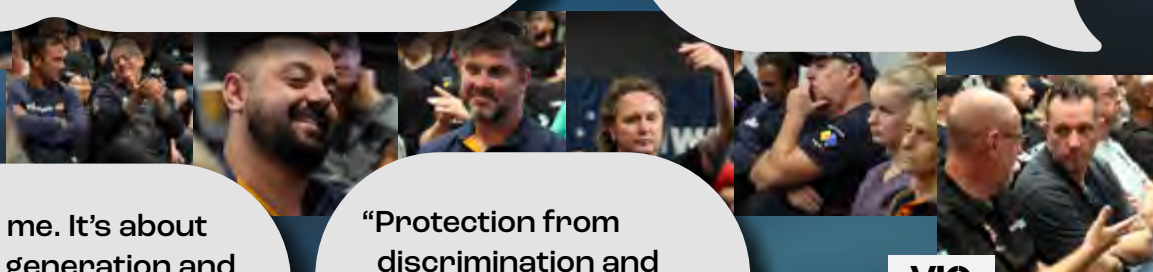


"Not all about me. It's about the younger generation and the subsequent generations of workers thereafter."

"Protection from discrimination and increased confidence in solidarity."

"We will see our children find work in trades and more well paid jobs in manufacturing."

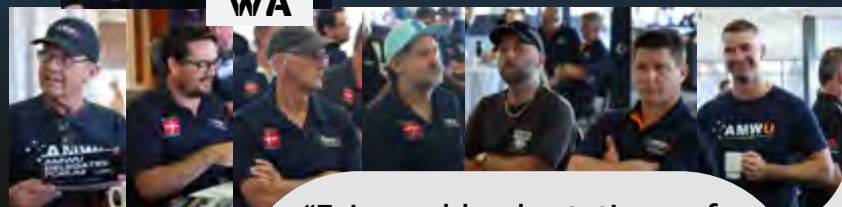
VIC



"If we had the right to take effective industrial action, we could actually make management treat the workforce with respect and fairness."

"Sense of pride and dignity in myself, my work and community."

WA

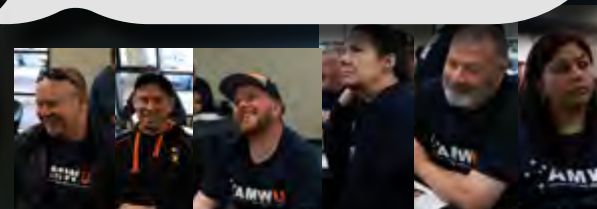


"Better industrial laws will allow us to influence substantial changes. Workers are far too restricted as it is. WE NEED THE RIGHT TO STRIKE!!!!"

"Fair workload rotation, safer tasks, and better support when workers are injured ... everyone deserves respect and a safe workplace."

"As a power worker a fair and just transition will help our community greatly and give people a sense of hope."

TAS



"Bigger manufacturing industry. More high quality, well paid, union jobs. Reestablished industrial base in Australia which can produce the goods and services that we need for a high standard of living."

Scan to read the AMWU's Union Blueprint For Action



The clock was ticking down fast. At Australia's only manganese smelter, Liberty Bell Bay in northern Tasmania, privately owned mismanagement had brought the site to the brink of ruin.

This is a sustainable, viable industry into the future. That's why we're here — to make sure it has the support it needs to continue.

WORKERS UNITE

to defend Liberty Bell Bay

Administrators warned that funds to pay wages would soon run out, threatening more than 200 workers with unpaid leave or redundancy. What was at stake went far beyond one workplace.



Liberty Bell Bay sits quietly near the small coastal community of George Town, but its role in Australian manufacturing is anything but small. It is the country's only producer of manganese alloy — a critical ingredient used to harden steel and support aluminium production. That steel flows directly into the major industrial steelworks of Port Kembla and Whyalla, and into the infrastructure that keeps Australia moving: construction materials, rail, transport and heavy industry. "Manganese is used to harden steel," AMWU Tasmanian Secretary Jacob Batt said. "It's extremely important that Australia has its own national sovereign capability to have this industry, to ensure steel can be hardened in Australia." For workers, allowing the plant to collapse was a betrayal of building national capacity for the sake of corporate greed. "We have the facilities here to make it ourselves," said AMWU member Alec Harper. "It doesn't make sense to bring it from overseas."

The crisis was traced directly to the mismanagement and siphoning of funds from the balance sheet by its private owner. Trouble began in 2020 when British businessman Sanjeev Gupta's GFG Alliance acquired the plant. Workers watched as the vital asset was methodically stripped. "All the money was taken out of the company and nothing was put back into it," AMWU delegate Nick Walker said. By March, Gupta's entire empire collapsed into administration, leaving Liberty Bell Bay hostage by financial fallout. Workers were told their wages were only secure for a few weeks. "And it's not just the workers at the plant," Nick added. "There are contractors, suppliers, and the whole community. This affects everybody in the north of the state — right down to the local takeaway shop." Instead of waiting for a corporate saviour, rank-and-file members took a stand. Across four unions — the AMWU, the Australian Workers' Union (AWU), the Mining and Energy Union (MEU) and the Communications,



Electrical, and Plumbing Union (CEPU) — workers built a unified industrial front, packed out a town hall in George Town and hit the streets with a mass public rally that put maximum political pressure on the state. They dragged the voices of workers directly into the light, refusing to let private capital destroy the futures of the next generation. "If I want to start a family, do I have a secure job? That's not an option here," AMWU member and fourth-year boilermaker apprentice Mikayla Binns said at the rally. "Deep down it gives me massive anxiety and stress thinking about having to go to another job." A petition by the Bell Bay Joint Unions circulated nationally gathered thousands of signatures, with workers and supporters across the country adding their voices.

The combined industrial pressure forced the federal and Tasmanian governments to cave, announcing an emergency package to guarantee wages while a long-term solution is found. In May, a joint union delegation marched into Canberra to demand a permanent sovereign manufacturing strategy. The message to parliament was that workers will not pay the price for the gambles of a billionaire speculator. "This is a sustainable, viable industry into the future," Jacob said. "That's why we're here — to make sure it has the support it needs to continue." Liberty Bell Bay remains a frontline battle. It is a direct confrontation between the production for social need and the production for private profit. The outcome will prove what we can win when workers stand unified across union lines. ■

Liberty Bell Bay

MUST STAY!



In the industrial heart of Sydney's Botany Bay, Opal's major manufacturing facility produces packaging seen in supermarket aisles and fast food outlets across the country.

UNPACKING A

A MWU members at the site manufacture cartons for brands such as McDonald's, KFC, Arnott's and Kellogg's, as well as boxes for vital medical products.

For AMWU delegate Daniel Phillips, the scale of the operation is massive.

"There are printing machines running the artwork and layouts onto the board, and die cutters that take that printed sheet and cut it into shape, adding all the creases and folds," he said. "Then it moves through folder gluers where the cartons are folded and sealed," describes Daniel.

Daniel works in the final stage of production.

"The cartons for McDonald's medium and large fries and apple pies all come through our area. My job is the final fold and glue before they leave the factory."

When Opal announced plans for a new facility at Moorebank, workers immediately faced intense uncertainty about their jobs.

The company offered workers jobs at Moorebank, but refused to clarify whether the changes amounted to a closure, relocation or restructure, according to Daniel.

During negotiations for their next EBA, workers discovered management was attempting to strip 25% shift loading on redundancy pay. This was a critical provision that applied in cases of restructure, designed to recognise years of demanding shift arrangements.

"The company tried to evade paying us the

FAIR DEAL

25%, kept us in the dark about redundancies. They wanted to get out of paying us," said Daniel. "It was anywhere between \$20,000 to \$60,000 of a loss for each worker and there were 70 of us," said Daniel.

For the workforce, management's behaviour was a direct insult. Instead of accepting the cut, members organised collectively throughout negotiations and lodged a dispute through the Fair Work Commission.

Recognising both the strength of the workers' case and the unity behind it, Opal ultimately backed down and agreed to include the full 25% shift loading in redundancy payments. The agreement was unanimously endorsed by members.

AMWU Organiser Fergal Eiffe said the outcome reflected the power of the shop floor. "The fact we secured shift loading is testament to the work of smart, proactive delegates and strong members," he said.

Whether transferring to the new site, or opting for redundancy, AMWU members remained united around a single goal, ensuring the boss could not shortchange a single worker.

"For those who are taking redundancy, winning the shift loading gives us that extra peace of mind that we'll be able to put food on the table," said Daniel.

"It also upholds the idea that when you go through redundancy you should be compensated for your full entitlements as a basic principle. Every bit matters." ■



When Nestle proposed moving production at its Campbellfield plant in Victoria to 24/7 operations, AMWU delegates **Kingsley Radipitse** and **Ben Pulemagafa** saw an opportunity to completely re-organise the workplace.



RECLASSIFIED, REORGANISED AND READY TO FIGHT

They refused to settle for the status quo. Instead, they showed the vision and ambition needed, benchmarking the site against the strongest enterprise agreements in the country to forge a better future for everyone on the shop floor.

AMWU National Bargaining Coordinator Chris Spindler said the turning point came when members began shaping both the claims and the campaign strategy.

"We put in so many conditions in the EBA that the company didn't want to enact a 24/7 operation," he said. "But the biggest change was the delegates starting to work together. They held regular mass meetings and maintained them throughout bargaining. Every item was discussed with members, so everyone understood what we were fighting for."

The delegate structure at the site also changed. Ben became the lead convenor for production, while Kingsley became the lead convenor for maintenance at the confectionery site. This new structure strengthened coordination across all shifts and helped eliminate the old days of working in isolation.

"When I became a delegate, each shift was fighting their own separate battles," Ben said. "Decisions weren't made in unity, but they still affected the whole workforce. We restructured so the rank-and-file could lead the struggle collectively. Unifying our workshop made the biggest difference."

That unity was reflected in the protected industrial action ballot, where an overwhelming 96% voted in favour of striking. Workers then escalated to protected industrial action, holding stop-work meetings at the beginning of every shift and maintaining sustained pressure on the company.

One of the campaign's biggest victories went beyond immediate wage increases. Out of the dispute came the activation of a hidden reclassification system embedded in the agreement, delivering massive long-term wage and classification progression for the maintenance crew.

For Kingsley, that meant moving from a C10 maintenance fitter classification to a C6, delivering an immediate pay rise of around 30%. Around 20 to 30 of his workmates also progressed from C8 to C6, gaining increases of around 15%.

AMWU National Skills & Training Coordinator Paul Baxter said the classification system

was deliberately designed to create ongoing progression rather than a one-off adjustment.

"By having the right classification clauses in the EBA, we were able to prosecute reclassification processes that allowed members to progress over a period of time," he said.

This incredible outcome was written by the hands of the workers themselves through active participation, radical mateship and sustained pressure at the bargaining table.

Today, Kingsley and Ben help support more than 300 AMWU members at the site. Union density sits at an incredible 98%, with 13 active delegates across production and maintenance on both day and night shifts.

When Nestle responded to claims with delay tactics, workers responded with organised industrial action. Eventually, the company conceded, delivering improved night shift conditions, meal allowances, and the landmark classification framework.

"Now we have some of the best conditions for night shift workers in Victoria," Kingsley said.

With the next round of bargaining already on the horizon, the Campbellfield crew is preparing once again. Because they drove the fight themselves, every worker on site owns the power they have created — and they have built the ground-level structure needed to keep winning. ■





Nearly half of offshore workers report suffering a work-related injury each year. One in four feel pressured by management not to report safety concerns. And when they do speak up, the laws that should protect them often don't apply. A new report, co-written by the AMWU, has laid bare the reality facing offshore oil and gas workers in Australia.

In April, AMWU members took these stories to parliament, demanding reform to a system that too often leaves offshore workers unprotected.

Anthony* is a mechanical fitter working off the WA coast. Anthony and his crew were repeatedly exposed to highly toxic chemicals while applying a protective coating to weld joints. They were given no proper protective equipment. Instead, they received welding gloves. There were no wash basins, no air monitoring and no health checks. When Anthony tried to speak up, he was told to shut his mouth or get off the vessel. When he persisted, he was sacked. Years later, the chemical sensitivity caused by that exposure still affects his daily life.

Simon* is an electrical and instrumentation technician on a floating production vessel. He raised serious concerns about workers performing high-risk rigging tasks without proper licences or training. His employer's response was that "anyone can do rigging". When cheaper, ill-fitting harnesses replaced existing ones without consulting workers, Simon raised the alarm again. He was ignored.

Onshore, both cases would likely trigger immediate regulatory scrutiny. Offshore, companies can often operate under



weaker and inconsistent rules — and workers pay the price.

Safety regulations are outdated, full of gaps, and wildly inconsistent across states. Penalties for breaches are a fraction of what applies onshore. Union access and consultation rights can be restricted or shut down entirely. Workers who would be protected on land lose those rights the moment they go to sea. The AMWU is campaigning to harmonise the laws across all states and bring them up to the same standards as onshore workplaces.

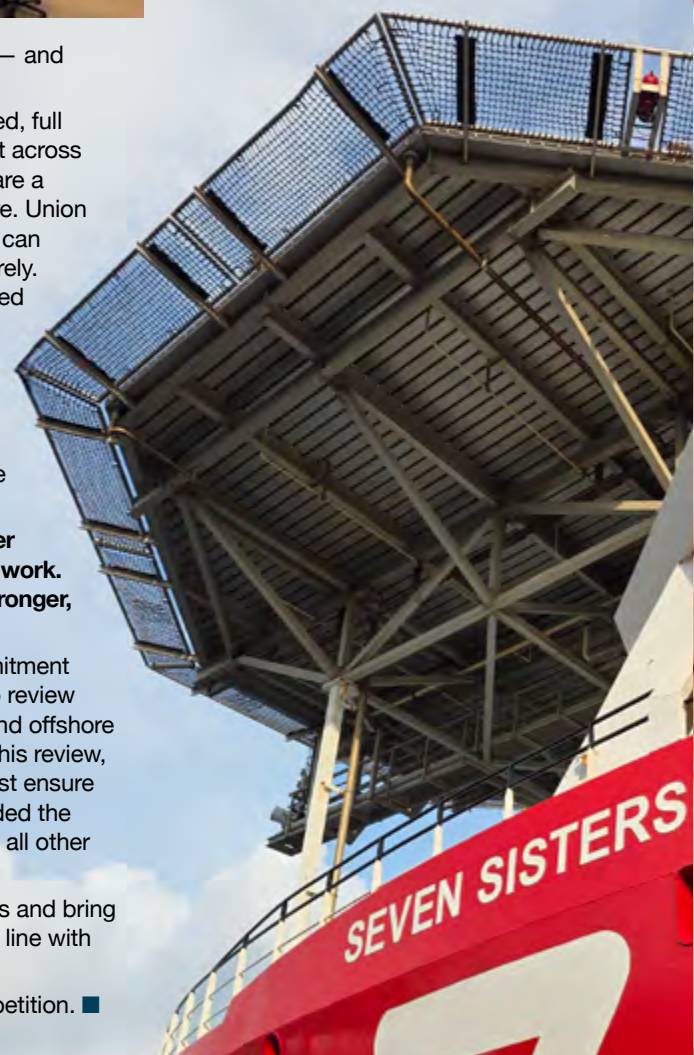
Offshore workers face greater risks than most Australians at work. Their protections should be stronger, not weaker.

Unions have secured a commitment from the federal government to review the laws governing seafarers and offshore workers to close these gaps. This review, which is due later this year, must ensure that offshore workers are afforded the same rights and protections as all other workers in Australia.

It's time to close the loopholes and bring offshore and maritime safety in line with onshore safety laws.

Add your voice and sign the petition. ■

Australia's offshore workers have some of the most high-risk and dangerous jobs in the country. They work in remote, isolated conditions around toxic chemicals, heavy machinery and extreme weather, facing a constant risk of serious injury.



Scan to view the campaign and sign the petition



Because **INJURY** shouldn't mean **INJUSTICE**

When AMWU delegate Gary* was injured in a truck accident on the job, he expected a system that would help him recover.

Instead, he found himself locked into a brutal multi-year conflict with an employer and a bureaucracy that chose to deny his injuries, block his treatment and protect corporate liability as Gary lived with a life-changing spinal injury.

For seven months, Gary's employer deliberately stalled, refusing to even lodge a Comcare report while his spinal injury worsened. When decisions about his medical care were finally made, management cut Gary out of the process entirely — dictating his treatment without his knowledge or consent as his injury continued to worsen.

Because the system protected the employer rather than the worker, Gary was forced to pay out of pocket for three major spinal surgeries. His surgeon has confirmed the damage is permanent.

The cost of this neglect has bled into Gary's home life. "I can't do normal things in life," Gary said. "I can't pick up my kids. I can't sleep more than three to six hours without discomfort."

Yet despite his body being broken on the job, the Comcare system completely denied his workers' compensation claim.

Gary's battle is not an isolated incident. He is one of nearly 470,000 Australian workers trapped under Comcare, a federal scheme that on paper promises rehabilitation, but in practice operates as a shield for employers against the financial costs of workplace injuries.



For too many injured workers, the system fails when they need it most.

In April, Gary and a delegation of militant union members took the fight directly to the halls of parliament in Canberra. They put a human face to what happens when a system is weaponised against the working class.

Their testimonies reinforced the findings of an independent review of the Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act, which governs the Comcare scheme. The review found a system plagued by delays and drawn-out disputes, systematically rigged to inflict financial hardship on injured workers until they drop their claims.

The review yielded 124 recommendations to strip power back from employers and rebuild the scheme around workers. The AMWU is demanding the immediate implementation of these changes, including provisional liability, full payment of claims within seven days, guaranteed wage maintenance, and immediate access to medical treatment.

Alongside the ACTU, our union is demanding the federal government implement these recommendations in full, without watering them down for the business lobby.

Today, Gary remains at work on light duties. Defiant and deeply respected by his crew, he has turned his personal struggle into collective power. As an AMWU delegate Gary spends his days organising and guiding other injured workers through the very system that tried to break him. No worker should spend months in pain, financial uncertainty and legal limbo simply to access support they are entitled to by law.

The AMWU will keep organising, mobilising and fighting for the full implementation of the recommendations from the Comcare review, so every injured worker gets the support they need when they need it most.

Because an injury at work is hard enough. It shouldn't also mean injustice. ■

Across the hum of conversation at the AMWU National Delegates' Training Day at the Blacktown Workers Club in Western Sydney, a young woman with bright auburn hair stood out from the crowd.

WORKERS ON THE FRONTLINE OF CHANGE



DELEGATE PROFILE

Ariel Brady

AMWU delegate Ariel Brady didn't fit the old stereotype of a union delegate — and that was exactly the point. In a room of experienced workplace leaders, she represented something new taking shape inside the union movement.

AMWU Organiser Nathan Clements noticed her across the room and gestured to the AMWU National Communications team, speaking about her with clear enthusiasm. **"You've got to speak to her," he said. "She's exactly who you want to hear from."**

Ariel was initially reserved upon introductions, but once she began speaking, that hesitation fell away. Her voice was steady, clear and measured — carrying a confidence that didn't ask for attention but held it anyway.

"We are facing the closures of coal-fired power plants, and that's terrifying," said the lab technician. "That's hundreds, and thousands, of people who are going to lose their jobs."

For Ariel, the reality of that transition is not abstract. It is already taking shape in the region she calls home.

"The Newcastle and Hunter is primarily a coal-mining region. Steel manufacturing and coal is massive for us. And it's intense, because everyone in the Newcastle-Hunter region knows someone who's employed by the mines, or other subsidiary companies that are involved in mining. So, it's a very scary time."

For almost seven years, Ariel has worked in coal testing and analysis for SGS Australia in Newcastle, part of the supply chain that underpins Australia's

energy and export industries. She works alongside a largely female workforce in a laboratory environment that plays a critical role in assessing coal quality for shipment.

The facility conducts coal sampling, testing and analysis for export supply chains — from collecting samples at ports and terminals through to laboratory testing, certification and reporting.

"Our job is primarily testing coal," Ariel said. **"We are going to be one of the industries that get hit really hard. They're going to lose their jobs and livelihoods if this isn't handled properly."**

The net zero transition is no longer a distant prospect. It is already reshaping workplaces like Ariel's. But too often, missing from the national conversation are workers in supply chains — the technicians, testers and operators whose jobs are tied directly to industries in transition.

That is why the AMWU is arguing for a just transition that invests in new manufacturing and secure union jobs, ensuring the skills of workers in energy, resources and heavy industry are carried into new industries rather than discarded.

"The AMWU's work in securing jobs for the future is incredibly important," Ariel said. "It's super important for the union movement as a whole to steer the ship on this, and make sure that our voices are heard."

For Ariel, the answer is not to resist change, but to shape it in a way that protects working people.

"We have the capacity to build amazing things here, and keep people employed. The government needs to listen to us," she said. "We're a smart nation. There's no reason why we shouldn't be making everything here." ■

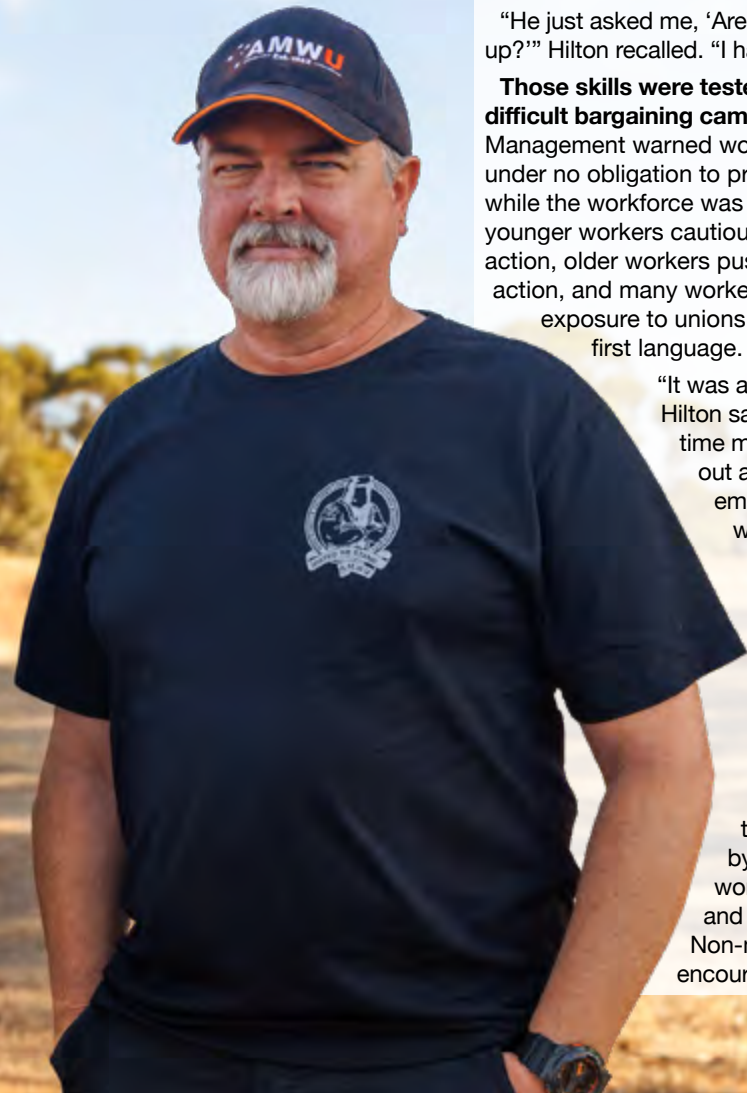
From the shop floor to PARLIAMENT



MEMBER PROFILE

Hilton Gumbys

After nearly 38 years as a fitter and machinist, **Hilton Gumbys** never imagined he would one day walk into parliament as a newly elected Labor Member of South Australia's Legislative Council.



But after years representing workers as an AMWU delegate, leading bargaining campaigns and standing up for his workmates, the move from the shop floor to parliament felt less like a leap and more like a continuation of the same work.

Hilton began his apprenticeship in 1988 in the defence and aerospace industry. As the son of a Scottish migrant and a Lithuanian refugee who rebuilt their lives in Australia, he grew up with a deep appreciation for hard work, craftsmanship and perseverance — values that would later shape his approach as both a delegate and political representative.

So when a long-serving delegate approached him about taking on the role himself, Hilton's answer was immediate.

"He just asked me, 'Are you going to step up?'" Hilton recalled. "I had no hesitation."

Those skills were tested during a difficult bargaining campaign in 2024. Management warned workers they were under no obligation to provide back pay, while the workforce was divided between younger workers cautious about industrial action, older workers pushing for stronger action, and many workers with limited exposure to unions or English as a first language.

"It was a tough year," Hilton said. "But every time management sent out an intimidating email, I'd get workers knocking on my door asking to join the union."

Rather than allow division to take hold, Hilton focused on building unity across the workforce by ensuring every worker felt informed and involved. Non-members were encouraged to attend

meetings and understand the role of the AMWU.

"One gentleman knocked on my door after a meeting and said, 'I don't know much about unions, but I like the way you run things. Where do I sign up?'"

The experience reinforced what Hilton sees as the foundation of both union organising and political representation: listening to workers and building collective strength around their concerns.

Although always politically engaged, Hilton said entering parliament was never part of the plan. But AMWU SA State Secretary Stuart Gordon saw potential in his leadership.

"I asked him to consider being a politician because of his activism with the AMWU — from his leadership on the shop floor, through to negotiations at the table, and beyond representing workers in the defence industry locally and nationally."

Through his involvement in workers' politics in the AMWU SA Political Committee advocating for apprentices, housing and stronger industrial rights for workers, he was endorsed to run as an ALP preselected candidate.

"People didn't want a political staffer or a lawyer," he said. "They valued having someone with direct workplace experience. I think having the voice of somebody who stepped straight off the shop floor into parliament really matters."

Stuart said Hilton represents something new, the first blue-collar worker to enter politics directly from the shop floor. "Hilton closed up his toolbox, and four weeks later, walked into the steps of parliament representing workers."

For Hilton, that sends an important message to AMWU members and delegates considering taking a more active role in campaigning, organising or politics.

"Nothing changes unless people put themselves out there," he said. "You'd be surprised how far you can go." While his path from the shop floor to parliament may once have seemed unlikely, Hilton hopes it shows why workers' voices belong in politics — not outside it. ■



OUR LABOUR, THEIR PROFITS:

CSL workers strike for security and respect

In early February, pharmaceutical workers at **CSL Behring** took the ultimate industrial step. They walked off the job and onto the picket line outside the company's Melbourne headquarters, demanding secure jobs, decent conditions and a wage that reflects the value they create.

Members of the AMWU, United Workers Union (UWU) and Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) launched their second 24-hour strike in two months. This escalated industrial action is a direct response to a pharmaceutical giant that prioritises corporate greed over the livelihood of its workforce.

These workers manufacture and package the critical, life-saving medicines used in hospitals across Australia and the globe. Yet, despite the highly skilled and essential nature of their labour, CSL executives expected them to absorb a real wage cut while the company continues to pocket massive global profits.

After nearly 12 months of corporate management stalling at the bargaining table, workers sent a message. An overwhelming 71% of the workforce voted to smash CSL's latest enterprise agreement offer, refusing to accept a deal that fails to protect existing working conditions or offer a real wage increase.

This dispute runs deeper than a percentage point in a pay packet. The unions have exposed management's agenda to attack the workforce by extending working hours, stripping back leave entitlements and restructuring contracts. This was a calculated attempt to destroy work life balance and extract even more labour time from an exhausted workforce.

In response workers are pushing the offensive, demanding a four-day work week to fight chronic fatigue and workplace burnout.

Management escalated its attack mid-bargaining by announcing a sweeping operational restructure affecting 329 employees — nearly half the workforce covered by the agreement. Unions have called out the coordinated attempt to permanently replace secure jobs with exploited, low-cost labour-hire casuals, while CSL continues to withhold full backpay owed since September last year.

This wage theft sits in sickening contrast to the multimillion-dollar payouts and bloated bonuses paid to CSL executives. While the boardroom enriches itself, the workers who mix and pack the medicine are left fighting for wage increases that merely keep up with the cost-of-living.

Despite the corporate intimidation and pressure, the multi-union alliance on the picket line remains ironclad and defiant.

Their message to CSL management is absolute: stop fighting against your own workforce and start respecting the collective labour that keeps your factories running.

The workers who manufacture these life-saving medicines create enormous value every day. The union will continue fighting to ensure they have secure jobs, decent conditions and a fair share of the wealth they produce. ■



For almost three decades, fitter **Scott Potter** has helped keep one of south-west Sydney's busiest hospitals, Liverpool Hospital, running. From maintaining critical infrastructure to responding when equipment breaks down, his work has been part of the unseen labour that keeps the public health system functioning every day.

RAISING THE STANDARD

But after 28 years on the job, the Skilled Trades Award covering public hospital and ambulance workers in New South Wales still offered little recognition of his experience, skills or contribution.

"There was nowhere to progress," Scott said. "You could spend decades doing the job and still be stuck on the same level."

That has now changed, because workers chose to fight back and demand structural justice.

AMWU members working across NSW hospitals and ambulance workshops are celebrating a major industrial victory, following the approval of the Public Health Service Employees Skilled Trades (State) Award 2024.

The new award delivers massive wage increases and a modernised classification structure for skilled trades workers across the public health system. Many of these workers had gone years without meaningful progression or pay increases that kept pace with the rising cost-of-living.

For Scott, the outcome has been life changing. Under the new structure, he has been reclassified from a Level 1 to a Level 4, delivering a pay rise of around \$12,000 a year, alongside backpay to 1 July 2025.

"I'll be honest, it's going to change my life, 100%," Scott said. "With petrol prices and interest rates going up, it really matters."

But the win did not come easily. It required ambitious delegate leadership and relentless rank-and-file members to force the broken system to change.

The outcome followed a sustained industrial and legal campaign led by the AMWU, Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU) and Electrical Trades Union (ETU), involving months of intense workplace advocacy and proceedings in the Industrial Relations Commission beginning in mid-2024.

Workers from hospitals and ambulance workshops across the state stepped forward to build the case for change. Scott was among those who gave evidence in the Commission, helping expose how outdated classifications had left skilled trades workers undervalued for years.

The campaign became about much more than wages. It was about recognition and respect. From repairing medical equipment to air-conditioning and hot water systems in public hospitals to ensuring the sirens and stretchers in ambulance fleets are emergency-ready — electricians, fitters, plumbers and other skilled trades workers play a critical role in keeping public health services safe and operational. Yet despite the importance of their work, many had been trapped in outdated classifications that failed to reflect their skills, responsibilities or experience.

By organising across unions and worksites, the workers led the struggle and completely reshaped the award framework.

"It wouldn't have happened without the collective effort from everyone," Scott said.

That unity proved critical to winning an outcome that not only delivers immediate wage increases but creates a stronger foundation for skilled trades workers across the public health system into the future.

In winning this fight, trades workers across the NSW health system have done more than secure fairer pay and recognition — they have raised the standard for every worker who follows. ■

It wouldn't have happened without the collective effort from everyone.

SWEET VICTORY

for Bundaberg Sugar workers

What began with just a handful of AMWU members at Bundaberg Sugar has become one of the most powerful organising stories in Queensland's sugar industry.

Through workplace conversations and organising, our members have doubled union density across the site — turning a once fragmented workplace into an organised stronghold. They have proven a fundamental truth: when workers back each other, management has no choice but to back down.

In an industry built on massive conveyors, cranes, crushers and processing plants, the bosses like to pretend the machinery is the most important asset on site. But this victory proves who really holds the cards. Machines don't produce wealth on their own — it is workers who keep production moving every day.

This milestone was not handed to us, and it did not happen overnight. It was built the old-fashioned way: through gruelling, honest shop floor conversations, after work meetings, pub catch-ups and taking the time to listen to each other's frustrations.

At the centre of that effort were AMWU delegates Roland Cox and Timothy O'Donnell. They broke down the artificial walls that management uses to divide us, bringing workers together across union lines by organising regular after-hours meetings involving members from the AMWU, ETU and AWU.

Open to every worker on site, these

mass meetings became the heartbeat of the campaign. It was here that workers shared their experiences, developed their collective demands and discovered their real strength.

By the time enterprise bargaining intensified, the company was no longer dealing with fragmented complaints. They were facing a united front prepared to withdraw their labour to secure a better future.

The result was an enterprise agreement delivering massive undeniable wins. Workers forced management to concede wage increases of 8% in the first year, followed by 3% in the second and 3% in the third. Recognising the value of skills and experience, trade-qualified workers hammered out an additional 8% increase in the first year.

Apprentices at the site — all proudly AMWU members — stepped up as some of the fiercest voices on the ground. Refusing to tolerate management's delays and uncertainty around their qualifications, they fought for and won stronger rights

over their trade sign-offs. Their courage on the floor inspired older tradesmen to stand right beside them in the fight.

In a massive blow to managerial prerogative, workers also won new provisions giving individual work areas a direct say — and a mandatory vote — over working arrangements and roster structures. This claws decision-making power away from management and puts it squarely back into the hands of the workers.

"This wasn't something handed to us by management or anyone else," said Timothy. "AMWU members built this from the ground up. Every meeting, every conversation, every new member made us stronger and by the time bargaining got tough, the company knew they weren't dealing with individuals anymore — they were dealing with a strong united workforce."

The impact of the campaign will be felt for years. Since organising began, the site has more than doubled its network of delegates and HSRs, building a permanent militant workplace structure to defend these gains and build worker power into the future.

From pub meetings to an ironclad collective agreement, Bundaberg Sugar is a proud reminder that the strongest gains are never handed down from above. Real gains are won when we organise the workplace, build collective discipline, and refuse to settle for corporate crumbs. ■



Melbourne's next generation of trains is taking shape in Ballarat, with the confirmation that an additional 25 X'Trapolis 2.0 (XT2) fleet trains will be built locally.

On track for LOCAL MANUFACTURING

This massive win is a direct result of the AMWU relentless industrial campaign to keep manufacturing work locked down in regional Victoria, securing long-term jobs at Ballarat's historic rail workshops and cementing the state's position as a manufacturing powerhouse.

The new fleet is being built to replace Melbourne's ageing Comeng trains, which are the longest serving trains on the Victorian metropolitan network.

While the initial commitment for the new trains alongside upgrades to the Craigieburn maintenance facility laid the groundwork, the real battle has been fought by union members ensuring that construction remains strictly in Ballarat under manufacturer Alstom. With the first trains expected to enter service in 2026, this project represents a massive win for the union. It is about locking in skilled work, rebuilding local manufacturing capability and ensuring future generations of workers inherit Victoria's proud rail manufacturing tradition.

AMWU Victorian State Secretary Tony 'Mav' Mavromatis made it clear that secure jobs are won through organisation and power, not corporate good will.

"It is great news for the workers of Ballarat," Mav said. "We are seeing a commitment to good, secure, long-term jobs because we stood up and demanded it."

The additional 25 trains will not only secure jobs for workers right now, but also help strengthen Ballarat's long-standing manufacturing skill base. This supports strong apprenticeships and ensures future pathways into a highly organised, unionised industry.

"This is all about vision, good local jobs, strong apprenticeships, and Australian-made products," Mav added, highlighting the significance of local workforce development.

The program has already generated up to 750 jobs across the broader supply chain, including around 150 critical positions directly in Ballarat. For manufacturing workers, these supply chains are a battleground. The union remains fiercely active in policing where components are sourced, ensuring that multinational companies cannot sneak in cheap overseas imports.

"Supply chains are critical to work like this," Mav said. "That's why we are always looking at where things are coming from, whether we can make them here, and how we can involve businesses, and small and medium enterprises in these projects to grow local content."

The expansion of this fleet continues Ballarat's deep connection to rail manufacturing while proving what can be achieved when a powerful, fighting union forces investment into local jobs and sovereign manufacturing capability. As the new trains move closer to entering service, the project stands as an unyielding example of what happens when a militant workforce stands together and refuses to let local manufacturing die. ■

This is all about vision, good local jobs, strong apprenticeships and Australian-made products.





Organising for a just future



Last November, 1,000 unionists from 130 countries brought a single message to Sydney for the **4th IndustriALL Congress**: the fight against corporate greed can no longer be fought in one workplace — or even one country — at a time.

IndustriALL Global Union represents more than 50 million mining, energy and manufacturing workers worldwide. For the AMWU delegation, the stakes of this gathering were clear. Decisions made in overseas boardrooms shape Australian wages and conditions overnight. Global solidarity is no longer a symbolic choice. It is an industrial necessity. In a globalised economy, an injury to one is deepened as an injury to all.

Held under the theme ‘Organising for a Just Future’, the congress focused on how unions can organise across borders, industries and supply chains.

AMWU National President Glenn Thompson told congress that workers everywhere are confronting the same corporate playbook.

“The challenges we face — wages suppression, union busting, precarious work, and supply chain exploitation — do not stop at any country’s border. Neither can our solidarity,” he said.

Glenn argued that international union networks must become far more than discussion forums, and that they must be weaponised to enforce the sacred rule of the labour movement. That a blow struck against workers on the other side of the world is a direct threat to workers right here at home.

“It’s imperative that we allocate the necessary industrial resources to develop resilient, self-sustaining global networks within and across those multinational corporations,” said Glenn. “When a company exploits workers in one region, it must face resistance from workers across its entire global footprint.”

“As multinational corporations grow in reach and influence, our movement must respond with equal strength and coordination.”

Overtuning old habits to match this global reality means modernising the movement itself. AMWU Assistant National Secretary Dave Henry successfully backed an amendment mandating 40% women’s representation across IndustriALL delegates positions.

“We must diversify our organisations, and as unions we must influence industry, not just be bystanders of capitalist desires,” he said.

That push for a younger, more reflective workforce was backed by AMWU Organiser Renee Portland and AMWU delegate Alexandra Paris, who demanded pathways for the next generation.

“We need more young leaders to represent the needs, desires and challenges that our youth today face,” Alexandra said.

The AMWU delegation returned home with a new strategic alliance and a sharper focus to underline the truth that we are one global working class.

The bosses operate globally, so the resistance to their agenda must match them step for step. When we stand together across the oceans and reject the attempts of capital to pit worker against worker, we remind the bosses of our absolute power: an injury to one is, and always will be, an injury to all. ■



When ORGANISED LABOUR is the answer

At the same time AMWU delegates were joining union leaders from around the world at IndustriALL’s 4th Congress, another delegation was on the tools in Indonesia helping train 43 union leaders — proving international solidarity is built not just through speeches, but through action.

The program was part of the work of the Southern Initiative on Global Trade Union Rights, otherwise known as SIGTUR. It’s an international union network the AMWU has helped build since the late 1980s. Spanning 14 countries across the global south, SIGTUR exists because multinational companies do not stop at borders, meaning the battle for workers’ rights cannot stop there either.

“The AMWU has had a long history of international solidarity,” said AMWU National President Glenn Thompson. “Our union has always understood that global capital organises against labour, and we as workers need to build capacity and power to fight back.”

Indonesia is central to that fight. It is a major manufacturing and resource economy, but workers there continue to face harsh conditions, weakened labour laws and dangerous workplaces. Corporate bosses frequently used these weakened rules to undercut standards globally, creating a race to the bottom that threatens working conditions everywhere, including Australia. Union leaders risk arrest for speaking out, while preventable workplace deaths remain widespread.

Among the participants trained by the AMWU delegation were members of the Local Initiative for Occupational Safety and Health Network, known as LION. These rank-and-file activists are campaigning against asbestos-related disease in mining communities around Jakarta where around 1,600 Indonesians die each year from asbestos-related illnesses.

The goal of the training was to build lasting, independent organising power on the ground.

Those 43 union leaders left equipped to train workers in their own workplaces and communities. Within weeks, participants were already running organising camps for young workers and community leaders, helping



develop the next generation of union activists to take on multinational employers.

For AMWU Organiser Madi Sarich-Prince, who was part of the delegation, the experience reflected the core purpose of the labour movement.

“Internationalism is the way we think outside of our own EBAs,” Madi said. “The union isn’t just a way to get the next pay rise, it’s the way we build a community to better our world.”

“When one worker is exploited, all of us are exploited,” Madi added.

AMWU WA State Secretary Steve McCartney believes that building strong unions across the region is vital industrial defence for Australian members.

Multinational companies operate globally, moving jobs and investment to wherever wages are lowest and regulations weakest. The labour movement must counter this corporate strategy, because the only answer to globally organised capital is globally organised labour.

SIGTUR is already planning further delegations to Indonesia and the Philippines, continuing the long tradition of workers standing together across borders. ■



VOICES OF WOMEN

IN TRADES AND TECH



Scan to view the Women's Voices From The Floor report



IT'S TIME TO CHANGE THE INDUSTRY CULTURE, BREAK DOWN THE BARRIERS AND MAKE TRADES A PLACE WHERE WOMEN CAN THRIVE.



The AMWU's Women's Voices From The Floor report, launched at ASC alongside Federal Minister for Skills and Training Andrew Giles, brings the real, raw experiences of our sisters out in the open. The findings are a stark reminder of what many of us already know: too many workplaces are still failing to look after women. Our report is a collective tool to deliver real, lasting change across our industries.

From day one, women face hurdles trying to get a foot through the gate into trades. Whether it's a lack of genuine training opportunities or old-school outdated attitudes from supervisors, the system is often stacked against them before they even pick up a tool.

I was sexually assaulted by a supervisor... four years later I'm still fighting them.

— MINING MAINTENANCE TRADES ASSISTANT



Nearly half of women surveyed reported a lack of training opportunities which blocked their entry into the trades. When employers treat training as an administrative burden rather than a commitment to the workforce, it's often women who are first to be sidelined. We are fighting to tear down these gatekeeper tactics so that any woman who wants a trade has a clear supported path to get there.

But getting into the industry is one thing — staying on the tools when the environment turns hostile is another. **A massive 78% of our union sisters reported experiencing bias or discrimination**, and nearly half identified sexual harassment as a key barrier to staying in the industry.



Perhaps the heaviest finding is that only 39% of women feel safe reporting these incidents. When management builds a culture where workers fear retaliation or assume nothing will be done, they are silencing women to protect themselves. No worker should ever have to carry that weight alone in the lunchroom or on the production line.

I wasn't going to be employed due to concerns over getting pregnant and distracting the men.

— AUTOMOTIVE MASTER TECHNICIAN

Even basic dignity is still being denied on some sites. Inadequate amenities, poor facilities and rigid rosters that refuse to accommodate family responsibilities are driving women out of our trades.

But we are not backing down. Our report sets up clear, non-negotiable solutions straight from the shop floor — absolute accountability for managers who cross the line, independent and safe reporting pathways, decent facilities and fair access to career progression.

This is the exact mandate of the AMWU's Breaking Barriers: Women in Trades and Tech project.

To every AMWU delegate, HSR and member who have shared their story and supported this work — thank you.

Real change doesn't come from corporate goodwill; it comes from the unbreakable bond of workers who look out for each other. That means men standing alongside women in their workplaces, speaking up against harassment, and helping build a culture of respect on every worksite.

Together we will keep organising, keep standing our ground and build a safer, stronger and more equal union workforce. ■

I would never report on fear of being seen as difficult. I now face discrimination from managers.

— TRADES ASSISTANT



MACKELLAR WORKERS TURN SETBACK INTO STRENGTH

What began as a largely non-union workplace at Mackellar Group has transformed into a united and organised workforce, with workers across Blackwater and Nambour preparing to bargain collectively for the first time.

The workers at Mackellar perform maintenance on mining and civil machinery, supporting operations from Queensland's Central Highlands to the Sunshine Coast. For years, many workers experienced little union presence onsite — until workers themselves decided it was time to organise collectively.

The campaign didn't begin with an easy victory. When AMWU members first moved to initiate bargaining through a Majority Support Determination (MSD), they lost by a single vote. Workers later discovered apprentices had been excluded from the process because they were covered by a different award — something neither workers nor the union had been informed of at the time.

The workers chose to look after each other and organised harder. They refused to let disappointment divide the site, instead, they wrapped their arms around the apprentices to make sure no one was left standing alone.

What followed was an intensive organising campaign built around old-fashioned face-to-face conversations. Recognising that real union strength is born from the shop floor, local delegates and AMWU organisers took the lead, moving through crib rooms and workshops during smoko. They spoke directly with workers, answering questions and building confidence crew by crew. The campaign was backed by coordinated digital outreach and hardcopy MSD petitions, giving workers across both Blackwater and

Nambour every opportunity to have their say and shape their own outcome.

Worker by worker, shift by shift, momentum began to build.

A workplace that once had little union presence was rapidly transformed. Workers openly backed collective bargaining and stood behind the campaign.

Faced with growing pressure and overwhelming workforce support, Mackellar Group conceded on the eve of the Fair Work Commission hearing, issuing the Notice of Employee Representational Rights (NERR) and formally acknowledging the workforce's right to bargain.

MACKELLAR WORKERS DIDN'T JUST WIN THE RIGHT TO BARGAIN — THEY BUILT COLLECTIVE POWER FROM THE GROUND UP.

It's a major industrial win — but more importantly, it's an organising win. AMWU members at Mackellar Group won the right to bargain and built collective power from the ground up.

And as bargaining begins, workers are entering negotiations stronger, united and proud to stand together in unity, ready to fight for real gains on wages, conditions and job security. ■

For almost a decade, the AMWU has stood alongside families in Perth's eastern suburbs through its deep support of the Swan Community Christmas Party.



SOLIDARITY in every season

This massive collective effort helped ensure hundreds of working families do not go without during the festive season, proving that the labour movement fights not only for bread on the table, but for the roses too: the dignity, community and moments of joy that every working family deserves.

Since becoming a major sponsor in 2016, the union has helped grow the event into one of the most important community initiatives in the Midland region, supporting more than 300 disadvantaged families.

Every year, families from across Midland and surrounding communities come together for a day of food, music, games and celebration. Children receive presents from Santa, while families are provided with Christmas hampers packed with essential food and supplies to help ease pressure over the holiday period. In 2025 alone, more than 200 hampers were distributed to families in need.

But behind the celebrations is months of work powered almost entirely by volunteers and ground level community support.

Founded in 2008 by community volunteer Di Ryder, the event relies on donations, fundraising and volunteers.

"This event is about making sure no family misses out at Christmas," Di said. "The support from the AMWU and the broader community makes it possible for us to reach hundreds of families every year."

The AMWU's involvement extends far beyond a sponsorship cheque.

Union members and organisers are actively involved on the tools, planning and coordinating the event, while securing donations and support from across the broader labour movement.

In the lead-up to the event, volunteers spend weeks packing hampers, wrapping presents and preparing the venue. This powerful effort reflects the best traditions of true community unionism.

AMWU WA State Secretary Steve 'Macca' McCartney said the Christmas party remains one of the union's most meaningful community initiatives, showing the solidarity that sits at the heart of our collective power.

"This is truly an event that has and will continue to be worth our while," Macca said. "Ensuring that our members see that we are not only active in their workplaces, but on the ground in the community is vital. **The AMWU is built on three pillars — industrial, political and community — and initiatives like the Swan Community Christmas Party are a clear example of that community pillar in action.**"

The Swan Community Christmas Party is a beautiful reminder that unionism is about more than just bargaining for wages and conditions. It is about standing with working people and communities when they need support most.

Through the ongoing work of volunteers and organisers, hundreds of families are able to experience the dignity, connection and joy that every single family deserves at Christmas. ■



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