

Public Services Bulletin



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Low paid workers face cuts to pay and conditions under proposed new modern awards

Many low paid workers, including young people and workers reliant in the safety net of awards, face cuts to their pay and conditions under the Australian Industrial Relations Commission's proposed new modern awards released today. The first batch of modernised awards released today fail the test of ensuring that no workers will be worse off and must be improved, say unions. Some workers will find their rates of pay have been cut under new job classifications in the streamlined award system and workers in small businesses of less than 15 employees will have no entitlement to redundancy pay.

ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence said it is unacceptable that workers stand to lose their entitlement to redundancy as we head into a potentially major economic downturn. "In uncertain economic times, it is more important than ever that workers are protected by a strong safety net and a guaranteed entitlement to redundancy pay. "WorkChoices took away workers' right to redundancy pay and these proposed new modern awards only partially give back that right.

"In the context of an economic slowdown that is likely to result in job losses, workers who lose their job could be out of work for many months while they look for other employment and it is essential they have redundancy pay to help during that period." "Unions have previously welcomed the award modernisation process because a modern award system is a major component of the employment safety net and a key part of sweeping away the legacy of WorkChoices.

"However, the bottom line must be that workers are not worse off. This was the clear message sent by the Australian public at the last election when they so forcefully rejected WorkChoices. "It is wrong that under the new classifications in the awards, there will be new employees taken on after 2010 who will potentially be paid less than current employees. "This will create two classes of workers, with young people entering the job market for the first time and workers who change jobs standing to get less pay and conditions than fellow workers." Mr Lawrence said there are some positive elements, including requirements for employers to consult about major workplace changes, including over retrenchments.

While the establishment of a standard loading for casual workers of 25% is a significant improvement in many sectors, there are tens of thousands of workers such as those in the textile clothing and footwear industry who will face a drop in pay. Also disappointing in the proposed new awards is the absence of an independent mechanism to resolve disputes through arbitration. "These awards are not due to take effect until January 2010. The Commission should use this period to consult further and make improvements," said Mr Lawrence. ACTU Media - Friday, 19 December 2008

<http://www.actu.asn.au/Media/Mediareleases/Lowpaidworkersfacecutstopayandconditionsunderproposednewmodernawards.aspx>

Infrastructure Australia

While a separate and more detail advice will be passed onto ASU branches around the announcements by Infrastructure Australia on Friday the 19th December, around projects etc, the report to the Government again raises the Howard government argument of questioning the public ownership of electricity generation see http://www.infrastructureaustralia.gov.au/files/A_Report_to_the_Council_of_Australian_Governments.pdf - more advice will follow on the ASU work and Infrastructure Australia

Ministerial Council on Energy - 17th Meeting Communiqué (Fed)

Ministerial Council on Energy at its 17th Meeting discussed Climate Change; COAG Energy Market Decisions; Australian Energy Market Reform Program; Energy Efficiency; Critical Infrastructure Protection; Energy White Paper; Carbon Capture and Storage Legislation.

*Of particular significance to the ASU is the issues associated with network changes, furthering the national market and national regulation, plus the reference to the **national white paper** for the industry – this later point could well be the most important issue we have confronted in the industry since the move for the creation of the national grid and market under the Keating government in the early 1990's. It's an issue that ASU will monitor and look at the possible responses, submissions, opportunities for Unions and also our ability to work with other unions in the industry in developing responses etc. The issue will be reported on and discussed at the next ASU national energy/electricity industry division meeting.- advice greg mclean*

Energy White Paper

State Government and Federal Government Ministers attending the recent national and state government energy /electricity industry ministers meeting noted the development of a Commonwealth Energy White Paper and welcomed the opportunity to participate in its development. The Energy White Paper will provide a comprehensive, integrated framework of long term policies and actions to ensure cleaner, adequate, reliable and affordable energy through to 2030. The scope of the Energy White Paper will include: exploration and development of energy; energy conversion; energy transmission and distribution; energy consumption; investment and trade; energy related technologies and services; and capacity building and skills development. The Energy White Paper will be released at the end of 2009. – Extract from Govt media

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The Public Safety Training Package Version 6 (PUA00 v6) is now available and current, online at NTIS.

<http://www.ntis.gov.au/Default.aspx?trainingpackage/PUA00> If you have any questions regarding the Public Safety Training Package, please contact John Scott, Public Safety Industry Advisory Officer on 03 9349 2797 or via the link below

http://www.governmentsskills.com.au/component/option.com_contact/task.view/contact_id.12/ - ASU members working in local government, railways and a range of regulatory areas would have units from this package in their skills and qualifications requirements

Migration is a trade union issue

On the occasion of the UN-declared International Migrants' Day (18 December), PSI joins the ITUC, Global Unions, civil society and the international community in celebrating the human rights of all migrant workers and members of their families worldwide. "For PSI, we see migration as a trade union issue. It is very important that migrant workers' rights are fully protected. Ensuring trade union rights for migrant workers is fundamental in fighting abuse, exploitation and exclusion of migrant workers, particularly undocumented migrants" explains Peter Waldorff, PSI General Secretary <http://www.world-psi.org/TemplateEn.cfm?Section=Home&CONTENTFILEID=23370&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm> - advice PSI

International solidarity is crucial for Zimbabwe trade union movement says activist

A trade unionist from Zimbabwe, who was arrested two weeks ago for attending a peaceful demonstration, has highlighted the importance of international solidarity for the future of the country's trade union movement. Speaking at the ITF Rail Workers' Section conference in Curitiba, Brazil, from 10-12 December, Gideon Shoko, General Secretary of the ITF-affiliated Zimbabwe Amalgamated Railway Workers' Union (ZWARU) outlined the dire situation in Zimbabwe. He explained: "It has become very difficult to bargain from the side of the union. In October an amount was agreed, which at that time was worth something, but which now is not even worth a slice of bread." "Zimbabwe is in a difficult situation – the cholera outbreak; shops are empty. There is a cap on the amount people are able to withdraw – 100 million dollars [US\$108] a week – 1kg of meat costs 80 million [US\$86], bread costs 2.5 million [US\$2.70] and a return trip in a combi taxi to buy these costs 10 million [US\$10.80]. Very high inflation. Not even countries in war have such high inflation. Without help from the ITF and its affiliates we will not get anywhere." He praised the action taken by the ITF and its affiliates to help secure the release from detention of several trade unionists, including himself and Keneth Nemachena, ZWARU's Southern Area Organising Secretary; a number of them were arrested on 3 December following their involvement in a demonstration. Conference delegates passed an emergency resolution condemning the arrests of and assaults on Zimbabwean trade unionists for carrying out legitimate activities. They also called on the ITF and its affiliates to do everything possible to support their fellow Zimbabwean trade unionists in their struggle to play their part in restoring democracy and rebuilding the country. <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/2914> - advice ITF

The latest ITF Railways bulletin No.30, has been published and circulated to ASU railway and public transport division branch representatives, the bulletin will be published in the future at the ITF web site <http://www.itfglobal.org/railways/newsletter.cfm>

The European Parliament has voted with an overwhelming majority to keep the working time directive strong. There were huge majorities on the three key points: a fair period in which to calculate the average working week; counting on-call time in the workplace as working time; and a phasing out of the opt-out from the directive. The margin of victory exceeded even the most optimistic predictions of proponents of a strong directive

Transport Administration (Staff) Amendment (Rail and Ferry Authorities) Regulation 2008 (NSW)

The object of this Regulation is to amend the Transport Administration (Staff) Regulation 2005 to re-make provisions relating to disciplinary proceedings, promotion appeals and reviews and disciplinary appeals for officers of RailCorp and Sydney Ferries. These provisions are currently contained in the State Owned Corporations Regulation 2003 which will cease to have effect as a consequence of amendments made by the Transport Administration Amendment (Rail and Ferry Transport Authorities) Act 2008, including the removal of the designation of RailCorp and Sydney Ferries as State owned corporations. – NSW govt media

Constitutional resolution welcomed by Federal Government

The Federal Government has welcomed the resolution passed at the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Constitutional Summit, which concluded in Melbourne last week. The final Declaration was voted on unanimously by delegates at the Summit and a copy of the Declaration can be found [here](#). The ALGA Board will take this position to the Australian Government and will also ensure it is included in discussions regarding constitutional recognition by the Australian Council of Local Government (ACLG) which is meeting in 2009. Local Government Minister Anthony Albanese hailed the outcome as an important step. "The Rudd Government and Federal Labor have a longstanding position of advancing constitutional recognition of local government," Minister Albanese said. However, the Minister cautioned that without strong grassroots support, any proposal was unlikely to be successful. "The time is right for this debate, with local government playing a greater role within our communities than ever before," he said. "The Rudd Government looks forward to working with ALGA, and through the Australian Council of Local Government, to determine the next steps forward." - source ALGA (ASU was represented at the conference by rank and file members, delegates from various industries that are Councilors and national office representatives)

New data provides snapshot of NSW councils (NSW)

Extensive data for all 152 NSW councils has been released by the NSW Minister for Local Government Barbara Perry. The 17th Comparative Information on NSW Local Government Councils report provides an important snapshot of 20 key categories for councils around the state. Indicators

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include council size, average rates charged and population size. The data contained in this report forms a valuable resource for all ratepayers, Ms Perry said. It is compiled in the spirit of transparency and accountability and is also a fascinating snapshot of councils all around NSW. – NSW govt media

\$830,000 to help collaborating councils save millions (VIC)

An \$830,000 Brumby Government grants program could help local government cut costs by working together on procurement. Independent research by Ernst & Young has identified savings of between \$180 million and \$350 million per year could be made in the procurement area if Victorian councils worked more closely together. Local Government Minister Richard Wynne today announced the successful recipients of Collaborative Procurement Program (CPP) grants, the outcomes of which could significantly reduce council costs and the pressure on rates charged to residents and businesses across Victoria. – Vic govt media

Legal Service not a constitutional corporation

An Aboriginal Legal Service Lawyer in the state of Western Australia WA has won the right to pursue his unfair dismissal claim, after the W.A. Industrial Appeal Court ruled the legal service was not a constitutional corporation. See Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australian (inc) v Lawrence

13th December – Third and Final Live Update from the UN Climate Change Negotiations

Welcome to this final 'live' video and written update on the UN climate change negotiations in Poland. Fitzpatrick Woods Consulting and IndustryEdge invite you to go to www.fitzpatrickwoods.com.au and view the latest video update or download the written updates.

Topics include:

- The Big Picture – The Divide Between Developed and Developing Countries
- The Big Issue – Its All About Money
- Emissions Reduction Targets
- Financing Climate Change
- Technology Transfer
- Harvested Wood Products

(Fitzpatrick Woods Consulting recently worked with the ASU on our climate change and quality public services discussion paper)

PSI web item - 10 December 2008 Human rights: universal, inalienable and indivisible

PSI celebrates the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - On 10 December 1948 the world's nations came together in Paris to sign the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, recognising that all human beings, regardless of race, colour, creed, age, class and gender, are "born free and equal in dignity and rights". 60 years after this monumental occasion, PSI General Secretary Peter Waldorff says, "*The 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights gives us the opportunity to pause for reflection. Whilst much progress has been made, the world is still ridden by conflicts, poverty, hunger, inequality and discrimination. Basic and fundamental rights, such as the right to life, liberty, and security of person, the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to freedom of expression remain unfulfilled in too many parts of the world and for too many people. The commitments enshrined in the Declaration are as much in need of realisation today as they were 60 years ago. Governments must act and they must act now*". To find out more about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights visit:

http://www.world-psi.org/TemplateEn.cfm?Section=Winning_workers_rights&Template=/Rights/Dec2008_EN_PSIStatement_IHR.htm

<http://www.knowyourrights2008.org>

<http://www.un.org/events/humanrights/udhr60>

<http://www.world->

[psi.org/TemplateEn.cfm?Section=Winning_workers_rights&CONTENTID=21822&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm](http://www.world-psi.org/TemplateEn.cfm?Section=Winning_workers_rights&CONTENTID=21822&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm)

ASU Human Rights Committee

As part of the ASU commitment to this important day and the ideals of Human rights, the ASU held its first Human Rights Committee Telephone conference of branches, on the 9th December 2008, in order to move to form an ASU National Human Rights Watch Committee, minutes of the meeting and our proposed action targets for 2009, are on their way to ASU branches.

Introduction: liberalisation, privatisation and the labour market (publication)

<http://www.etui-rehs.org/research/activities/Employment-and-social-policies/Books/Privatisation-and-liberalisation-of-public-services-in-Europe> - The liberalisation and privatisation of public sector activities have been the subject of heated debate since the 1970s. The chapters in this volume contribute to this debate by analysing the effects of liberalisation and privatisation on productivity and service provision, employment, wages and working conditions in a number of European countries. The focus is on the service sector, which has been the main source of employment growth in recent years. – the publication provides arguments to those working to oppose privatization of our Public Services .

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