

Public Services Bulletin



• local government • energy-electricity • railways & public transport • water •
• state & federal government services •
21st September 2009

Workplace victims groups join with unions in call for stronger health and safety laws. Family members of people who have died at work have joined with unions to lobby the Federal Government over new health and safety laws. In a letter to the Deputy Prime Minister, leaders of victim support groups in Victoria, NSW and South Australia have urged stronger health and safety protections to prevent more families suffering the heartbreak of workplace deaths and injuries. The letter says that proposed changes to workplace health and safety laws fall well short of providing world's best practice. Advice, Australian Council of Trade Unions.

Government invests \$970 m in high quality early childhood education. The Minister for Education, Julia Gillard, and the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Child Care and Youth, Kate Ellis, today announced that all State and Territory Governments have signed on to the Rudd Government's \$970 million Universal Access to early childhood education initiative.

World Economic Forum hears warning on growth. The World Economic Forum's summer meeting held in Dalian, China, wound up on Saturday with a warning that no durable recovery in the global economy would be achieved until deep and painful reforms had been undertaken to reverse structural imbalances; and promote more equitable and environmentally sustainable growth. "The world has to refocus the way we do business" said Sharan Burrow, the President of the International Trade Union Confederation, addressing a final session of the event which drew 1,300 top executives, economists and government officials from 86 countries. "Jobs, skills and ageing populations have to be taken into account that don't just depend on export-driven growth, so we have a much more equitable globalisation. "The initial ebullience at the outset of this three-day gathering, based on recent signs of economic growth, quickly surrendered to a more sober assessment. The consensus was that the global financial crisis had shattered the financial system that had been driving global growth for 50 years. "The world is in an L-shaped recovery" said Zhu Min, the Group Executive Vice President at the Bank of China in Beijing. The crisis had shaken trust in institutions, governments and in capitalism itself, Mr Zhu said, "This financial crisis has changed the whole world." More here:

<http://www.thenational.ae/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20090912/BUSINESS/709129888/100>

Queensland Premier Anna Bligh has announced plans for a public information campaign to explain her Government's sale of state-owned assets, despite calls from the Opposition that the money would be better spent on more effective tourism promotion.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/video/?play=news>

Labour Force August 2009. Labour force figures released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics show that the unemployment rate remained steady in August at 5.8 per cent. The result is below market expectations which had been at 5.9 per cent. The result indicates that Australian companies continue to take steps to keep workers and where possible translate full time jobs into part time, recognising that retaining skilled workers will be important as the global economy starts to improve.

http://www.deewr.gov.au/Ministers/Gillard/Media/Releases/Pages/Article_090910_144725.aspx

Learning from Down Under: Where Labor Policy is Center Stage. <http://kochan.lerablog.org/> Article - President Barack Obama's Labour advisor, Professor Tom Kochan, and other members of the American delegation to the World IR Congress. Those of us from the U.S. who attended the just concluded World Congress of the International Industrial Relations Association in Sydney, Australia experienced a rare treat and learned firsthand how out of sync are America's efforts to modernize labour and employment policies with what is happening here and around the world.

E-Bulletin. Industry Skills Council for electricity industry workers <http://www.ee-oz.com.au/content/view/104/71/>

Market rates for 457s. The Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, has announced details of the requirement for temporary skilled overseas workers to be paid market salary rates. The payment of market rates will ensure subclass 457 Visa holders are on the same wages and conditions of employment as those provided to an Australian worker undertaking equivalent work in the same workplace. Where there is an equivalent Australian worker in the workplace, the market rate will be determined by the industrial arrangements that apply to this worker; for example, a collective agreement, award, award conditions with above award salary rates or a common law contract. Where there is no equivalent worker onsite, the employer may reference collective agreements or awards for that position to substantiate the market rate. If there is no applicable agreement or award, other evidence such as

Produced for ASU Branches with members in public services: NSW US Branch / Victorian Authorities & Services Branch
Tasmanian Branch / NSW & ACT (Services) Branch / South Australia & NT Branch / Western Australian Branch
QLD Services Branch (QSU) / Central & Southern QLD C&A Branch / North QLD C&A Branch / Taxation Officers Branch

Authorised and published by Greg McLean, Assistant National Secretary
Australian Services Union, Level 8, 321 Pitt Street, Sydney, New South Wales, 2000, Australia
Tel: +61 2 9283 9280 | Email: gmclean@syd.asu.asn.au | www.asu.asn.au

remuneration surveys or earnings data must be provided. Senator Evans said the subclass 457 Visa scheme was a demand driven program designed to supplement - not replace - the local workforce when there were serious skills shortages. Under current arrangements, employers are obliged to pay workers on subclass 457 Visas the minimum salary level of \$45,220 or the award rate. This means overseas workers can be paid less than an Australian employee in the same workplace who may be paid at above award rates, which is the market rate. Market salary rates will apply to all new subclass 457 Visa holders from 14 September 2009, except where annual earnings of \$180,000 or more are proposed. Visas will not be granted to new subclass 457 Visa applicants if the market salary rate for the position is below a temporary skilled migration income threshold of \$45,220. The threshold will be indexed in line with ABS earnings data. Under transitional arrangements, employers currently paying less than the market salary rate to existing subclass 457 Visa holders employed in Australia will have until 1 January 2010 to commence paying market rates. See www.immi.gov.au

Promoting sustained economic recovery through a global jobs pact. The Global Unions (ITUC, GUFs, TUAC) have prepared a statement for the ministerial-level annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which will take place on 6-7 October 2009 in Istanbul.

Mansour Ossanlu, a leader of the Bus Workers' Union in Tehran, who continues to sit in an Iranian prison. His only crime was to engage in the same kind of non-violent, legitimate trade union activity that you and I do every day. Since his arrest 26 months ago Ossanlu's health has deteriorated. This is not just what we say. It's what the prison Doctors say, which is why they have recommended he be given medical treatment outside of jail. However the case judge says that he cannot be treated outside the prison. Ossanlu's health continues to deteriorate and today Amnesty International is launching a large-scale global campaign to call for his fair treatment and release. I urge everyone reading this message to do two things right now; 1. Go to http://amnesty.org.uk/actions_details.asp?ActionID=628 and send your message; 2. Pass this email on to at least 10 friends and co-workers. Thank you. Eric Lee – labour start <http://www.labourstart.org>

New industry-focused resources to support Water Operations. Government Skills Australia (GSA) is pleased to announce a complete suite of resource materials aligned to Certificate II, III and IV of the NWP07 Water Training Package will be available soon! Resources to support Certificate II are a couple of weeks away from their official release and resources to support Certificate III and IV are currently under development and will be available by November 2009.

Australian Council of Trade Unions MEDIA RELEASE Thursday, 10 September 2009 Senate report confirms need to abolish coercive powers in building and construction industry. Unions have welcomed the recognition by a Senate Committee today that there is no place for coercive powers in any workplace and that all workers should be subject to the same laws. A report of the Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Legislation Committee inquiry into the Building and Construction Industry Improvement Amendment (Transition to Fair Work) Bill 2009, has backed union concerns that coercive powers in the industry are an infringement of civil rights. "The overriding principle is that there should be one set of laws for all workers, regardless of the industry they work in" said ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence.

South Australia to move to National Fair Work System (FED). The Minister for Employment & Workplace Relations, Julia Gillard, welcomed the introduction of legislation into the South Australian Parliament by the Rann Labor Government which will bring employees and employers in that state under the new national Fair Work system. The Rudd Government was elected with a commitment to create a single national system of workplace relations for the private sector to drive productivity. The move today by the South Australian Government is a vote of confidence in the Rudd Government's new Fair Work laws and marks the next step in the creation of a national system. The Rudd Government will introduce legislation later this year to give effect to referrals in time for full commencement of the national system on 1 January 2010.

ASU quality public services and climate change discussion paper – now updated and located at <http://www.asu.asn.au/media/climate-change-paper18nov08.pdf>

Last year LabourStart sponsored the first-ever international Labour Photo of the Year competition. It was a huge success. Photographers from all over the world submitted their pictures and a panel of expert judges selected a short-list of the five best. Our readers then voted in their thousands to choose the winning photo. LabourStart has announced the second annual Labour Photo of the Year. To encourage and recognise the talents of worker-photographers around the world, and at the same time to encourage them to tell the stories of our struggles in photos. The deadline for submissions of photos is 30 September 2009. Full details, visit: <http://www.labourstart.org/lpoty/>

UN and Republic of Korea partner to boost 'green' growth. The United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) has joined forces with the Republic of Korea (ROK) to support the East Asian nation's quest for a sustainable 'green' economic future in the midst of a global recession. UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner noted that Asia – particularly the ROK, China and Japan, as well as Australia - have seen the greatest share of economic stimulus packages channeled into environmental investment. More: <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=31814&Cr=unep&Cr1=green> - advice PSI

Produced for ASU Branches with members in public services: NSW US Branch / Victorian Authorities & Services Branch
Tasmanian Branch / NSW & ACT (Services) Branch / South Australia & NT Branch / Western Australian Branch
QLD Services Branch (QSU) / Central & Southern QLD C&A Branch / North QLD C&A Branch / Taxation Officers Branch

Authorised and published by Greg McLean, Assistant National Secretary
Australian Services Union, Level 8, 321 Pitt Street, Sydney, New South Wales, 2000, Australia
Tel: +61 2 9283 9280 | Email: gmclean@syd.asu.asn.au | www.asu.asn.au