



# QUEENSLAND BRANCH NEWS

NEWSLETTER of the QLD Branch of the MARITIME UNION of AUSTRALIA

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*To be truly radical is to make hope possible, rather than despair convincing - Raymond Williams*

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## May Day 2017 - Vale Keiran Smith – Hunterlink Here for Members Jobs Task Force - MUA Supports Power Workers - IDC Brazilian Affiliation

### May Day 2017

*THERE WERE HUGE MUA contingents marching on May Day, particularly in Brisbane, Gladstone, Townsville, Mackay and Cairns.*



Brisbane May Day 2017



Townsville May Day 2017



Gladstone May Day 2017



In Brisbane, 30 000 trade unionists and their supporters marched on a number of issues with the number one being the Turnbull government support for the recent Fair Work Commission decision on penalty rates which attacks the

rates of pay on some of this Nation's lowest paid workers.

It delivers in one, rotten, foul swoop the single, largest wage cut since the Great Depression of the 1930's.

The MUA contingent, 300+ strong, had as its main rallying cry,

“SOLIDARITY” as the great Harry Bridges who led the US West Coast Longshore Workers for four decades said, “is the single most important word in the language of a worker.”

Some members have asked me about the quote on the back of the May Day Shirt, “to be truly radical is to make hope possible, rather than despair convincing.”





The quote comes from the work of the outstanding British Marxist thinker, writer and cultural critic, Raymond Williams. Raymond was the son of a railway worker and his writings have been enormously influential on the left. A fine man who left an important body work for all there on the left who want to develop a dignified and fairer society free from domination and exploitation.

Tuesday, May 2, 2017 gladstoneobserver.com.au

NEWS 5

# Anger still simmers on slashed penalty rates

**Emily Pidgeon**  
HUNDREDS of workers took to the roads yesterday to stand up for what is fair. Families, young children, union members and even their dogs marched in protest of fair work rates including penalty rates. Australian Workers Union (AWU) member Greg Shields said the loss of penalty rates would create a dire future.

"We don't want to lose penalty rates," Mr Shields said. "Once it starts it keeps going."

Mr Shields said the cuts in penalty rates did not just impact hospitality workers, but spread across all industries including tourism at Byron Bay.

"Lots of people don't realise it's a lot of other things too, not just coffee and small shops," he said.

"There are low penalty rates, there's not much left is there?"

AWU member Bruce "Binks" Bickell said penalty rate cuts could be fair for flat rate workers who worked Monday to Friday.

"We work shift weekends, public holidays and get shift rates... it's a big chunk of your income rate," he said.

"They don't imagine the community where they're working and they treat it like slave labour."

Electoral Union (EU) member Robert Chard said the May Day march was important to give all the workers a voice.

"Everything from holidays, four weeks annual leave, sick leave... all the things people take for granted," Mr Chard said.

"Nothing was ever given to any worker just because a boss was generous."

Because of the idea that Australians live in a constantly open community, Mr Chard said that justified the decision to cut penalty rates. "Now they're taking



GOOD ROLL UP: Gladstone turns out for the annual Labour Day march.

PHOTOS: PAUL BRAVEN GLADSTONE/ABLUM/XXX

**“Once we lose penalty rates, there's not much left is there?”**  
— Greg Shields

penalty rates since people are losing the distinction, everything there we're a 34% increase," he said.

"There needs to be some hardy time there."

"Just leave penalty rates alone, just leave them alone. It's so simple as that."

Queensland Senator

Murray Watt, Gladstone MP Glenn Bucher, Gladstone Region Mayor Matt Torbett and councillor Kim Goodrick all attended the march.

The march started at Gladstone Council Chambers car park and finished at the Gladstone marina with live entertainment and a barbecue.

AWU member Zac there was happy with the turnout yesterday.

"It has been good given we've had a lot of workers who have and members are still signing up," he said.

— More pictures: Page 22



CALL OUT: Maritime Union of Australia organiser Paul Pizzarello rallies the marchers.

News Article Gladstone Observer by Emily Pidgeon 2 May 2017

## Vale Keiran Smith

ON TUESDAY MORNING, I spoke with the above member's Dad who advised me of Keiran's passing. Keiran was a decent man who was a delight to know but he was battling his own demons. He is particularly, fondly remembered by Carol Conlon, our Branch Manager, who spoke with Keiran often about their shared love of animals.

Keiran's passing is a sharp reminder for any person who reads this article, HELP IS ONLY A PHONE CALL AWAY. I urge any member to ring Hunterlink on 1800 554 654, call any Official, Organiser, speak to your mates at work, call Lifeline on 13 11 14, but please, please reach out. *Dear fellow workers, please remember that a trouble shared is a trouble halved.*



## Important Message from Hunterlink

IT IS WITH great sadness that this week another member of the Maritime industry in Australia has lost their life to the tragic epidemic that is suicide. Every day, suicide claims 8 lives in Australia, and these distressing figures are a timely reminder to look out for your mates.

Hunterlink are here to provide support during difficult times. If you need to speak with someone, you can call Hunterlink 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on our confidential and free helpline. There is no wait time, and your call will be answered by a trained, professional counsellor. All information is kept strictly confidential, which means nothing you say will be shared back to your workplace or employer.

If you are concerned about someone at work or in your personal life, give us a call on their behalf to talk it out and have a professional help you assess what's going on. Some common signs someone may be struggling include:

- Withdrawing from colleagues or friends and family
- Appearing stressed or distracted
- Going through a recent trauma or loss, including relationship breakup
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- Talking about death or wanting everything to stop or go away

Evidence suggests that early intervention saves lives. Remember, help is only a phone call away. If you or someone you care about needs support, please don't hesitate to call Hunterlink on 1800 554 654.

## MUA Members Support Power Station Workers

COMRADES, GLADSTONE POWER station company "NRG" whose major shareholder is "RIO TINTO 42.125%" have actively declared war on the hard working workers. NRG is a multinational joint venture company who operate out of New Jersey, USA.



NRG seek to terminate the current EA as well as destroy the power station award. If NRG are successful it will loom large on all

employers to do the same when it's their turn for EA negotiations. As you can see from the picture, the Gladstone community are fed up with the constant and

spineless attacks on its workers and together will take on the multinational company for what are fundamental rights all workers have.

The MUA members in Gladstone give their full support to each power station worker and together multinationals will think twice before attacking workers.

*In solidarity - Phil Hansen - Gladstone Tug Delegate*

### **ALP Task Force Public Hearing in Kallangur Queensland**

TUESDAY 2 MAY saw an Australian Jobs Task Force hold a public hearing and was held and hosted by the Hon Susan Lamb, MP for the Federal Seat of Longman at Kruger Hall, Kallangur. Among the vast range of Unionists present were QCU Secretary Mike Clifford, three employer personnel and four MUA members, Glen and Harlen Frew, Dale Eaton and Mike Barber. Also in attendance was Federal ALP Hon Justine Keay, MP from the Tasmanian Seat of Braddon whose father was a seafarer.

Focus was mainly upon the devastating personal impact and struggle of those no longer employed and other issues around the ongoing struggle to defend worker's conditions and workplaces. Ways to enforce accountability and monitoring once EA's were in place, became the central discussion concluding with demands that State and Federal Governments implement and reinforce those aspects when licensing work or workplace EA's.

Glen and Harlen spoke about their respective industry sector, including the dangers associated with Partnership Agreements. Harlen spoke about his frustration of being highly trained and no work available after training. Dale spoke on his personal situation since his brutal removal from the MV Portland. Mike spoke about the illegality of 'Partnerships' under the Fair Work Act, uncovered by the vigilant Queensland Branch of the MUA.

Mike concluded that the trade union movement is best suited at what it does, protecting and defending workers, including the *High Court decision on "our right to work in our own country."* Also, including a demand that "a Federal ALP Government when elected, remove 45d and 45e, secondary boycott legislation and all other Federal and State Anti-Union legislation. It includes reintroducing the "right to strike" as prescribed in UN Human Rights conditions. Mike Clifford QCU, supported such a demand, and added that "an ALP Government remove all barriers to trade unions doing their job."

May Day in Brisbane has seen yearly increased participation with over 30,000 marchers in Brisbane. Let us not forget the words in the song "Solidarity Forever." "In our hands is placed a power greater than their hoarded gold, greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand-fold. We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old, FOR THE UNION MAKES US STRONG." *Mike Barber - Queensland Branch Member*

### **Brazilian Dockers Secure Affiliation with IDC**



IDC General Coordinator, Jordi Aragunde and IDC Latin American and CARICOM Zone Coordinator, Ricardo Suarez met with Latin American port workers to coordinate regional goals and solidify the affiliation of three Brazilian unions, representing over 15 000 dockworkers.

### **Queensland Branch News Wins Award**

Congratulations to all involved with the Queensland Branch News. The 2017 Labour Day Awards were held on Friday 28 April and the Branch News was awarded a Highly Commended for Best Union Newsletter or Small Publication.



### **Unity Bank Official Branch Launch**

All day coffee and cookies, official Branch Launch on Wednesday 10 May 2017. Come visit and help us celebrate!

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