



QUEENSLAND BRANCH NEWS

NEWSLETTER of the QLD Branch of the MARITIME UNION of AUSTRALIA

73 SOUTHGATE AVE., CANNON HILL 4170 - Phone: (07) 3395 7215 - Fax: (07) 3395 7688 - Email: muaqld@mua.org.au

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

No. 97 – Friday 4 August 2017

2017 ALP State Conference – Maritime Unions Fearful of "Encroachment" by Super-Union - NSS 50 Years Direct Action in Brisbane - Decline in Trade Union Membership – Harley Raffle - Book Corner

Report on the 2017 ALP State Conference

By David Greene, National Legal Officer

THE QUEENSLAND BRANCH was well represented at the 2017 ALP State Conference in Townsville. Assistant Branch Secretary Paul Gallagher was joined by National Assistant Secretary Ian Bray, National Legal Officer David Greene (Delegate) and MUA veteran John Campbell (Delegate).

Given that we are in an election year, this was a fast-track conference, running over 1.5 days from Friday afternoon to Saturday evening. This was the first ALP conference in regional Queensland in over 20 years, and was a testament to the ALP's commitment to regional Queensland.



David at the ALP State Conference supporting people with a disability

The conference was very heavily focused on the regions, with the keynote speakers, Bill Shorten and Anastacia Palaszczuk making announcements particularly targeted at helping regional Queensland. A Shorten Labor Government will make \$1bn available for the development of tourism infrastructure in Northern Australia, noting that the LNP has failed to spend any of the \$5bn Northern Australia Infrastructure fund in over 2 years.

The conference was very heavy on Labor's significant achievements in Government. When the ALP came into

power, 104,000 sat on hospital waiting lists for longer than was clinically recommended. That number is now down to 38,000. Labor has committed to making free healthcare available to all refugees living in Queensland who aren't eligible or covered by Medicare.

Labor has also created 77,000 jobs in just 2.5 years.

Labor's focus was on contrasting the attitude of the ALP to frontline services with the cuts and chaos of the LNP. While the LNP cut 14,000 jobs, Labor has restored and increased frontline services in just 2.5 years, including: 122 Fire and Emergency Service Workers, 332 Police Officers, 4000 Nurses, 1100 Doctors, and 3400 Teachers.

It was a weekend of significant announcements too, like the Queensland Government's 'Buy Queensland' initiative – an Australian first – which will see Government procurement focus on putting Queenslanders first, and making sure Queensland businesses and subbies get first shot at any tenders.

Labor is also in the process of dealing with industrial manslaughter – introducing a new offence of 'Negligence Causing Death' which will help prevent workplace deaths and punish those employers who act negligently.

Labor will also start a process towards an Australian Republic, and will take serious steps at a federal level to tackle inequality. These steps will include an overhaul of the poisonous Fair Work Act, reducing or eliminating tax breaks for the wealthy and corporations, and winding back the recent cuts to penalty rates. Labor has also committed to repealing the anti-union ABCC legislation.

The conference also had a future policy focus, and importantly for the MUA, we saw movement on two significant issues of concern to our members. If returned to Government, Labor will create a Parliamentary Inquiry into intra-state shipping, including looking at employment and economic opportunities in intra-state shipping in Queensland. That will happen within the term of the next Parliament.

The Government will also move to deal with the issue of partnerships at a whole-of-Government level, not

Authorised by Bob Carnegie, Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) Queensland Branch Secretary

73 Southgate Avenue, Cannon Hill QLD 4170

limiting their resolution to changes to the Partnership Act alone. The exact wording of the new section is as follows:

Labor does not support the use of partnership agreements and other sham contract arrangements by employers in the maritime industry. Labor will explore options to amend the Partnerships Act 1891 (Qld) or other relevant legislation to ensure that partnership agreements are not used to de-unionise the workforce and avoid entitlements and legislative protections that currently accrue to employees in this industry. Labor will, therefore, urgently review the process and act to prevent it.

While this is an improvement in the ALP's commitment, it will take a big lobbying effort from the MUA to keep the pressure on and ensure that the result we need is achieved within the next Parliament.

The MUA was also proud to support our brothers and sisters in the ETU on their motion calling for a Just Transition energy strategy in Queensland. The motion called on the Government to establish an independent expert panel inclusive of all stakeholders to establish a just transition plan, including a framework for implementation, by 2018, to raise ambition and realise job potential associated with effective Just Transition, work with states and territories to develop a national framework to transition to a low carbon economy in a fair and just way, and commit to establishing a Queensland Just Transition Plan for the energy sector by December 2018.

This was a controversial motion for some, and there was heated debate, but thanks to the persistence of the ETU team, the motion was carried unanimously by conference. MUA delegate John Campbell also moved a motion which is worth repeating in full:

This Conference calls upon Federal Labor to legislate that, if the Fair Work Commission reduces wages and/or penalty rates for workers, that those presiding on the Commission who choose to reduce wages should first have their wages reduced by the same percentage so as they can fully understand the effects of such decisions.

The only major controversy of the weekend related to a motion on dying with dignity. The motion was carried by conference over the protests of some on the right. The ALP is now required to introduce legislation for voluntary assisted dying for adults who are terminally ill, following the model of the Dying with Dignity/Oregon Model, and the Voluntary Assisted Dying legislation in Victoria. Labor's legislation will be preceded by a parliamentary inquiry.

The conference was largely a platform to launch Labor's bid for re-election to State Government, and was a success in that regard. The overwhelming focus of the Palaszczuk Labor Government is on jobs and job creation, particularly in regional Queensland. However,

the party is moving forward with a bold social agenda which will improve the lives and living standards for millions of people across Queensland.

The conference also crystallised how valuable it would be for the MUA to have one of its own in the Parliament when issues of partnerships, intra-state shipping, and industrial relations reform come up for debate.

The MUA's focus this year was on partnerships and intra-state shipping, but over the next 12 months we need to work together to bring forward bold policy reforms to next year's state conference, and to ensure that we increase our union's representation and numbers on the floor of state conference.

Next year's conference will be held in Brisbane, with a proposal to be considered that the 2021 state conference be held in Cairns.

If you would like any more information about the conference or any of the policy items, please contact David Greene on david.greene@mua.org.au.

NSS Stop Work Meeting

MEMBERS FROM NSS attended a union meeting discussing the long running drama of their EBA. Currently negotiations have been going longer than 'Coronation Street' and members have had enough! A full report will be in the next Branch News. The Queensland Branch is very proud of members and the revitalised Site Committee.



NSS members at 4 hour Stop Work Meeting Townsville

Maritime Unions Fearful of "Encroachment" by Super-Union

Our proposed merger with the CFMEU creates consternation with the other maritime unions. Bob Carnegie

Wednesday, August 02, 2017, 5:13pm

Sourced from:

https://www.workplaceexpress.com.au/nl06_news_selected.php?act=2&nav=11&selkey=55910&utm_source=daily+email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=subscriber+email&utm_content=article+headline&utm_term=Maritime%20unions%20fearful%20of%20%22encroachment%22%20by%20super-union

TWO MARITIME UNIONS concerned about protecting their territory are seeking to intervene in the Fair Work Commission's hearings to consider the planned three-way merger of the MUA with the CFMEU and the TCFU.

The Australian Institute of Marine and Power Engineers (AIMPE) and the Australian Maritime Officers

Union (AMOU) have both applied to be accepted as having an interest in the proceedings.

Earlier this year, both unions objected to proposed changes in the MUA's rules that would have extended its coverage to a wider range of occupations within port authorities.

They argued the rule change would allow the MUA to represent port authorities' maintenance technicians, marine pilots, pilot cutter officers and signal station officers.

The AIMPE's director of government relations and senior national organiser, Michael Bakhaazi, said today said that the MUA rule changes were withdrawn after opposition from his union and the AMOU.

But Bakhaazi told Workplace Express that both unions were still concerned about "encroachment" by the MUA on their rules in future.

"It's about attacking our rules and attacking our coverage, our members that we've been looking after for 119 years," said Bakhaazi. "We believe they [the MUA] will have another go at it and they will have more resources." "We have evidence they want to encroach on our rules and the rules of the AMOU and we think it's just wrong." MUA national secretary Paddy Crumlin declined to comment. Comment is being sought from the AMOU.

The application to push ahead with the planned merger between the CFMEU-MUA-TCFU is due to have a preliminary hearing before Deputy President Val Gostencnik in Melbourne on Friday

The CFMEU has asked to be exempted from conducting a ballot of its 130,000 members on the ballot, while ballots will be conducted of the MUA and the TCFU memberships.

It is argued the CFMEU, as the largest organization with almost 130,000 members, will be less affected by merging with the MUA-TCFU, which have a combined membership of 16,000.

The Australian Mines and Metals Association has sought documents on the merger from the FWC and has expressed concern about the stability of the resource supply chain "from pit to port" if it goes ahead. AMMA also objected to the MUA's plan to broaden its coverage rules earlier this year.

Meanwhile, documents filed with the Commission show the secretary of the CFMEU's Queensland construction division, Michael Ravbar, voted against the merger proposal at its national executive.

50 Years Direct Action in Brisbane

IN 1967, 4000 STUDENTS marched from the University of Queensland into the city to defy a ban on marching. This civil liberties march was about the right to protest. But it signalled more than a march, it was the sign of a new politics. With growing community support, this current drew on and influenced various political movements in Queensland and beyond.

The march strengthened the opposition to Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War and conscription and was a harbinger of the future mass actions of the moratorium marches and the Springbok demonstrations as well as a new focus on gender and race equity and participatory forms of democracy. This conference celebrates and questions the civil liberties march of 50 years ago, exploring its relevance today. Branch Secretary, Bob Carnegie will be guest speaking at this event.

The conference aims:

- to celebrate in a critical sense
- to understand subsequent actions and how they affected the participants
- to explore how contemporary struggles can be more influential

Session 1 – Remembering the 1967 civil liberties march

Speakers address what happened and the social & political context of the movement

Moderator: Jim Beatson

Welcome to the country – Bob Anderson

Acknowledgment – Peter Wertheim

Speakers – Dan O'Neill, Di Zetlin, Jon Piccini

Panel – speakers plus Lyn Plummer

Session 2 – taking stock

Moderator: Debbie Beattie

Speakers – Jim Prentice, Bob Carnegie, Jennie Harvie, Lilla Watson

Panel – speakers plus Lachlan Hurst, Peter Wertheim, Lynda Boland, Carole Ferrier.

Session 3 – The future is in your hands

Moderator: Greg Mallory & Marian Redman

Speakers – Drew Hutton (Lock the Gate), Prof Ian Lowe (the big picture), Adrian Skerritt (the Cloudland Collective), Cameron Murray ("Game of Mates"), Adrian Burragubba (Adani), Natalie Osborne (urban community action), Ellen Roberts (Get Up).

Panel - speakers plus Jonathan Sri (Green's councillor), Gary Foley

Speakers articulate contemporary activism, outlining the forms of organization, communication and problems faced in the present.

Videos, speakers, Q&A. Have your say too. **Lunch and afternoon tea provided**

How can I contact the organiser with any questions?

Please email Mitch

Thompson: mitchthompson@powerup.com.au

REGISTER & BOOK YOUR TICKET TO ATTEND NOW.

Cost: \$30 and includes morning tea and lunch.

\$10.00 for students and unemployed

Book here: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/50-years-of-direct-action-t...>

DATE AND TIME

Sat. 9 September 2017

10.00 am – 5:00 pm AEST

LOCATION

Emmanuel College, St Lucia

64/70 Upland Rd QLD 4067

Entry 4

Entry via Sir William MacGregor Dve - Use Entry 4

Big Drop in British Union Density

This article by British Revolutionary Socialist, Marxist and great friend of our Branch, Martin Thomas, highlights the recent sharp and very worrying decline in British trade union density. Bob Carnegie

ACCORDING TO GOVERNMENT figures, trade-union membership in the UK had its biggest one-year percentage drop ever in 2015-6, by 4.2% to 6.2 million. The proportion of employees who are trade union members fell to 23.5%.

This is disappointing, since UK union membership grew slightly in 2014-5, both in the public and in the private sector. The economic environment is not especially adverse.

Unemployment has been falling since the end of 2011 and is now 4.5% - bad, but still, the lowest it's been since 1975. Profit rates in the UK (excluding North Sea oil) are now solidly back to the high pre-2008 levels. Economists are puzzling why in this situation real wages are going backwards, and since 2008 have declined worse in the UK than in any other European country bar Greece.

The 6.2 million figure comes from the government's Labour Force Survey. The Certification Office figures, which come from trade unions' own returns, and include retired members, show a smaller drop. That gives a first clue to the puzzle. Trade-union membership has been ageing for a long time. 39% of employed trade-unionists were aged over 50 in 2016, and the latest survey of union reps (2011) showed an average age of 48, up from 45 in 2004.

Trade union membership will thus decline "automatically" unless unions make special efforts to organise young and often insecure workers. On the whole, despite much talk, they don't.

The (small) Bakers' Union is running a good campaign, Hungry For Justice, to organise fast-food workers. Some new micro-unions, the Independent Workers Union of Great Britain and United Voices of the World, have made gains, by publicity campaigns and legal action as well as strikes and such, among cleaners at universities and in big companies bothered about public image and among couriers, in London.

The broadcasting union BECTU is supporting strikes by cinema workers in the Picturehouse chain, but very cautiously, reluctant to sanction picket lines or campaign against the recent sacking of four Picturehouse union reps.

Mostly, the unions have retreated into safer areas, where they find better-off and more secure workers. And in those safer areas they are so cautious and conservative that they do not bring forward new, energetic, young

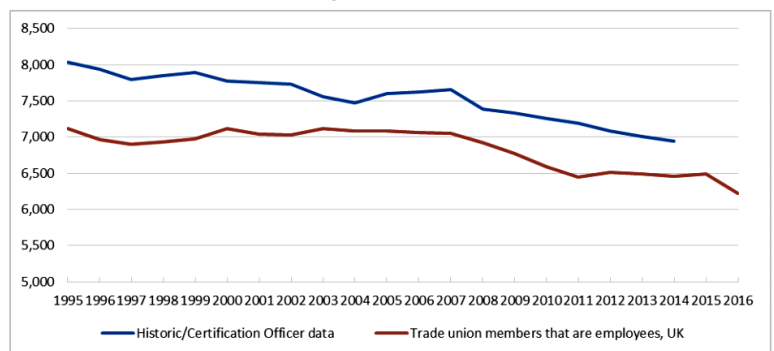
activists.

29% of employees with a degree are unionised, and only 16% of those without credentials. 48% of employees in education are unionised, but only 18% in manufacturing (down from 33% in 1995).

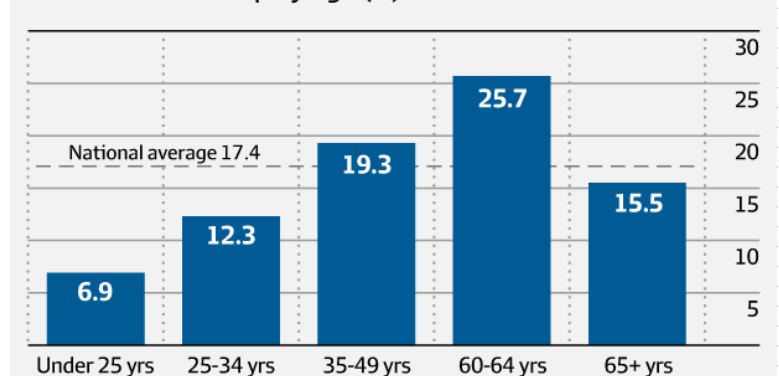
Other factors in the latest drop may be the Tories' latest Trade Union Act, which makes national strikes in the public sector almost impossible, and the government's moves against dues check-off in the civil service. The civil service union PCS reported the biggest drop in membership to the Certification Office: 231,323 to 195,091.

Australian trade unionism, sadly, shows a similar general picture. The answer may be difficult, but it is simple. Help workers organise democratically and militantly to win better conditions, as the new micro-unions have done with tiny resources! Don't let the bureaucratic tail of the unions wag the workplace dog.

Trade union membership levels in UK from 1995 to 2016



Union membership by age (%) - Australia



Support the Zanon Ceramics Factory in Argentina - Defend Fifteen Years of Workers' Self-Management

Both the Queensland and Sydney Branches of the MUA are supporting these brave workers on the other side of the world. Bob Carnegie

WORKERS AT THE Zanon ceramics factory in Argentina, also known as FaSinPat (Fábrica Sin Patrones - Factory without Bosses), marked its fifteen years of workers' self-management at their factory in October 2016. They are still fighting to defend their jobs today – and now they need our help.

Authorised by Bob Carnegie, Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) Queensland Branch Secretary

73 Southgate Avenue, Cannon Hill QLD 4170

Zanon: Bosses' versus workers' control

Bosses (1979-2001)

- 12 hour average shifts.
- Workers on six month contracts.
- An army of supervisors that watched over every worker.
- An average of 25 accidents a month, some of which were amputations.
- Fourteen workplace deaths since 1979.
- Hundreds of millions of dollars of debt owed to governments and creditors.

Workers (2001-today)

- Eight hour day with the same basic wage for all workers.
- Over 300 new jobs created.
- No serious accidents.
- No subsidies or credits received from governments and creditors.
- Over 1000m² of tiles donated each month to schools, clinics and families in need.

The last 15 years have seen the workers at Zanon face all manner of challenges. There have been numerous legal hurdles, police repression and a number of attempts to evict them from the factory, as well as physical assaults and death threats directed at members of the workforce.

Now they face what could be their toughest challenge.

Argentina's recently elected right-wing President Mauricio Macri has unleashed a "tarifazo" (utility price hikes) that saw electricity bills spike by over 500 percent. The government has also refused to grant the Zanon workers the credit they need to replace the deteriorating plant and equipment that is now over thirty years old.

The situation has become critical. Zanon is struggling to maintain production levels and it is becoming harder to cover the workers' fortnightly paychecks. There is a very real danger that the jobs that sustain hundreds of families will be lost.

While the workers at Zanon continue to fight for much needed technological renovation, they have set up a Solidarity Fund for donations that will help them to cover their wages and continue production.

After 15 years of struggle under workers' self-management, Zanon workers are still fighting to defend their jobs. Now they need the support and solidarity of the world's trade union movement.



Resolution in support of Zanon ceramic factory workers

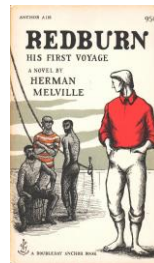
The Zanon ceramic tile factory in Argentina was first occupied by its workforce in October 2001, and has now been operating for over fifteen years under workers' self-management. The struggle of this famous "Factory without Bosses" for jobs and dignity has served as a beacon for all those fighting for a better world.

But now the hundreds of jobs at Zanon are under threat from skyrocketing utility prices, and the factory's aging machinery desperately needs replacing.

Therefore, as an expression of our solidarity with the struggle of the Zanon factory workers, this meeting of the Queensland Branch of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) calls on the Queensland MUA Branch Executive to:

- a) Donate \$500 to the Zanon Solidarity Fund.
- b) Commission the writing of an article about the Zanon workers' struggle for an upcoming edition of *Queensland Branch News*.
- c) Encourage other MUA branches and the National Office to consider making similar donations as well as publicise the struggle of the Zanon workers among the membership.
- d) Investigate what other solidarity actions can be taken in future to help raise funds and publicise the 15-year long struggle of the Zanon workers.

"Zanon es del pueblo" - Zanon belongs to the people
For more info. see <http://endefensadezanon.com/en/> and <http://www.leftvoice.org/zanon>



Book Corner By Craig Buckley

OUR READING GROUP now has several of the works of Herman Melville under its collective belt, including the subject of this week's review, *Redburn: Being the Sailor-boy Confessions and Reminiscences of the Son-of-a-Gentleman, in the Merchant Service*. Critics and

Melville historians consider that the book is largely autobiographical, based on Melville's own experiences.

The book chronicles the experiences of a young man from a relatively privileged background who signs on as a common seaman on a merchant ship bound for Liverpool. We witness his difficulties with the physical demands of work and life at sea, such as overcoming his fears when climbing the mast and rigging. We also see him struggle to find his place amongst a crew comprising men from very different backgrounds to his own: including the ship's bully, Jackson, and later, a young English hustler (Harry) who joins the crew.

Redburn also gives us authentic descriptions of the (1830s or thereabouts) Liverpool docks, the poverty of its working-class districts, and a young sailor's naïve impressions of the seedier aspects of London society when he accompanies Harry on a trip to the capital.

Melville is said to have been dismissive of *Redburn* in his later years, suggesting that it was something he wrote only because he needed the money ("for tobacco"). Critics speculate that he was embarrassed about revealing so much of his younger life. In any event, I can recommend the book as well worth a read, and of particular interest to those who have an interest in the seafaring experiences of an earlier age.

Like the last book I reviewed, it is also available free on the internet, at this url: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8118>

Harley Raffle

TICKETS ARE SELLING fast for the grand prize 2017 Breakout Harley Davidson motorcycle to be drawn at the MUA Queensland Branch Conference in November. It has been badged with the MUA Queensland Branch logo. Only 1000 tickets to be sold. These are a bargain at only \$50 a ticket.



You need to be a current financial union member of good standing to purchase a ticket. This will be checked. Ring the branch office - 3395 7215. If you're an interstate member and won it, you'd need to come and pick it up.



We Need Volunteers to support David Greene's campaign for the Seat of Everton

1 hour per week on a Wednesday or Saturday

We need an MUA voice in Parliament and one hour per week from you can make a huge difference

Please contact Debbie Manchin on 0421 083 995 or email debbie.manchin@qld.alp.org.au



Branch Officials Details

QLD Branch Secretary Bob Carnegie

Mob: 0439 478 996

Email: bob.carnegie@mua.org.au

QLD Deputy Branch Secretary Jason Miners

Mob: 0401 211 866

Email: jason.miners@mu.a.org.au

QLD Assistant Branch Secretary Paul Gallagher

Mob: 0408 494 168

Email: paul.gallagher@mua.org.au

QLD Organiser Paul Petersen

Mob: 0404 453 869

Email: paul.petersen@mua.org.au



**Authorised by Bob Carnegie, Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) Queensland Branch Secretary
73 Southgate Avenue, Cannon Hill QLD 4170**