

BONDS MOONLIGHT FLIT!

29 May

A community assembly was set up outside West Swanson Dock in Melbourne over night after word got out that Pacific Brands, manufacturers of the iconic Bonds label, was attempting to ship taxpayer funded equipment out of the country.

Transport workers have come together to call on the federal government to step in and save the jobs. TWU federal secretary, Tony Sheldon, said the government could prevent the job losses by using its buying powers to secure Australian jobs.

"What we have here is policy which exports Australian jobs and imports unemployment," Mr Sheldon said.

"The union completely understands the public outrage," said MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin. "They've taken taxpayer-funded machinery like thieves in the night. It's an outrage."

RTBU National Industrial Officer Andrew Thomas said workers would be gob smacked at Pacific Brand's action.

"Does Pacific Brands really think that Australian workers would enjoy standing on the shoreline waving their jobs good bye?" he said.

"We need governments at all levels to put in place conditions which ensure Australian workers are looked after when they spend our taxpayers dollars," said Mr Sheldon.

TELSTRA CHANGES COURSE

26 May 2009

The announcement by Telstra's senior managers that the company will abandon its aggressive industrial relations policy and restart negotiations with unions over a new collective agreement is a major win for Telstra staff, says the ACTU.

It shows workers must always be treated with respect, said ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence.

"Telstra is a major Australian company and yet its standing in the community and its performance as a business have both declined significantly in recent years as a result of the company's belligerent approach to all and sundry.

"The decision to acknowledge the right of employees to be represented by their union is a vindication of the stand taken by staff against the company's unethical behaviour in negotiations.

"Thousands of Telstra workers stood up to defend their rights and voted to reject the repeated attempts by management to pressure them into sub-standard job contracts.

"Telstra management broke off all negotiations with unions in August last year, and subsequently embarked on a blatant strategy to divide its workforce into different classes of employees.

"It was only a matter of time before management would realise its hardline stance was untenable, and the only surprise is it has taken so long.

"Thousands of Telstra employees have not had a pay rise for almost two years and we

look forward to sitting down with the new management as soon as possible.

"This decision sends a clear message to employers all around Australia that they must respect fundamental workers' rights to collective bargaining and union membership." said Mr Lawrence.

JOBS BUDGET

14 May 2009

Responding to the Federal Budget, ACTU President Sharan Burrow said:

"The Budget provides a strong plan for creating jobs now and in the future by supporting climate-friendly industries and giving extra funding for the critical role of research and development and higher education in generating innovation.

"The Budget also brings more equity and compassion into the heart of the nation and buries WorkChoices by setting up a new system of workplace relations.

"Unions strongly welcome the massive commitment to support and create jobs by fast-tracking upgrades to schools, public housing, hospitals, roads, ports, rail and to build a new national broadband network.

"It will be essential that the Government uses these projects to maximise the creation of local jobs, provide apprenticeships for young Australians, and strengthen local industries.

"This Budget confirms the biggest upgrade of schools in Australia's history and contains a big boost to skills development and training, which will help strengthen Australia as an internationally competitive and productive economy for the future.

"It also continues to meet the challenge of climate change and positions Australia to grow jobs when the downturn is over by supporting the development of local renewable energy, carbon-capture technology and climate-friendly industries.

"On top of the support that working families have already received in recent months, this Budget gives extra support to older Australians and victims of the global economic crisis, spreading the load more equitably across the community.

"Unions are also delighted that this Budget contains an historic commitment to a national, government-funded 18-week paid maternity leave scheme for working mothers.

"Looking ahead, further steps are needed to protect jobs and workers' rights, including equal rights for construction workers, lifting health and safety standards through new national laws, and ensuring low paid workers get a decent increase in minimum wages. This will help maintain their living standards and provide a further boost to the economy," said Ms Burrow.

BANK JOBS VICTORY

7 May 2009

Following intense campaigning by Finance Sector Union members, Westpac responded to growing concern over off-shoring Australian finance jobs. Its CEO, Gail Kelly, said she has, "decided to suspend further off-shoring until conditions improve."

The Commonwealth Bank had previously announced it was extending its practise of not off-shoring jobs. Neither NAB nor

ANZ—the most aggressive exporter of Australian jobs—committed anything to reduce the number of jobs sent off-shore.

After Westpac's surprise move, the FSU said it was seeking concrete commitments from each bank CEO that the ban would be extended to all banks, on a permanent basis. The big four banks reported total half-year profits of \$9.5 billion.

The FSU estimates about 5,000 finance jobs have been off-shored to-date.

"We welcome Gail Kelly's announcement. It's a good first step in building a better finance industry, and will save hundreds of Australian jobs," said Leon Carter, National Secretary of the FSU.

"Finance sector workers and their families need certainty, and our community needs our major banks to invest in Australian finance jobs."

The FSU will be writing to each CEO, as well as Treasurer Wayne Swan, seeking binding agreements to keep jobs in Australia. The union has advocated that conditions like job guarantees and responsible lending be attached to taxpayers guaranteeing the banks' risks.

"If we can work with the banks and Government to stop creating jobs elsewhere and keep Australians working, that will be excellent news," Mr Carter said. "We've had two banks move away from off-shoring, we now need to see this happen across the whole industry."

EMISSIONS TRADING

5 May 2009

The Government's emissions trading scheme is being delayed until 2011. The Southern Cross Climate Coalition a national group that includes the Australian Conservation Foundation, ACTU, the World Wildlife Fund and Australian Council of Social Service has called for unions, environment and social welfare groups to support the Federal Government scheme.

But it warned extra investment in renewable energy technologies like solar thermal, and extra incentives for retrofitting commercial buildings were important next steps.

ACTU president Sharan Burrow said Australia would be "behind the eight ball in the global race for climate-friendly jobs and industries" if the scheme was not supported.

"The reforms announced today will provide the certainty needed for industry to begin investing in renewable energy and solutions to climate change so that

Australia can create up to 1 million climate-friendly and green jobs over the next two decades.

"This proposal acknowledges the harsh economic realities facing the nation and the necessity to carefully assist exposed industries during the transition so that jobs are protected.

"It also establishes a more ambitious longer term target that can be achieved by substantial investment in renewable energy, efficiencies in households, businesses and industries, and new technology such as carbon capture and storage.

"It is time for all sections of the community to move forward with real action on climate change. The looming environmental catastrophe from doing nothing is too serious for further squabbling."

CURRAWONG VICTORY

1 May 2009

The proposal for residential development at Currawong has been refused, the entire site will be State Heritage listed and any future proposals for the site will go to Pittwater Council.



NSW Planning Minister, Kristina Keneally, said she has refused a project application which would have allowed a 25 lot residential subdivision at Currawong Beach, in Sydney's North.

"I received the best expert advice and detailed comments from the community, I went and saw the site, and based on that I have decided to refuse the application," Ms Keneally said.

"My decision followed thorough and considered canvassing of the facts and local community opinions, including more than a year of rigorous assessment and community consultation.

"This was a development proposal for a unique and pristine area which warranted the significant review process it went through.

"The process included an extended period of community and stakeholder

consultation and review by an Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel and a Ministerial Review Panel."

UNIONS ARE GROWING

ABS data released on 17 April shows there has been a lift in union membership of more than 56,000 workers and that, excluding casual workers, almost one in four employees in Australia are members of a union.

The data shows there are more than 1,750,000 workers that are members of a union and that union members earn, on average, \$96 a week more than non-members.

ACTU President Sharan Burrow said the new data was positive considering most of the Howard Government's WorkChoices IR laws were still in place when the ABS survey took place.

"This data shows unions are still relevant and strong.

"In these tough economic times it is especially important for workers to be members of a union.

"Unions help protect jobs as well as workers' wages and conditions.

"In the economic downturn, it is all the more important that workers support each other through their unions.

"We are working hard to protect as many jobs as possible and to safeguard the wages, conditions and entitlements of employees affected by the crisis.

"The lift in membership shown in the ABS data is welcome considering many union members are excluded from the results because they are deemed to be contractors rather than employees.

"Despite the tough economic times, it is a very good time to join a union." said Ms Burrow.

JOIN BMUC

Blue Mountains residents can become BMUC members if they support our Aims and Objects. Membership is open to union members, to retired unionists and to those who are unemployed or unwaged.

Membership Fees
Waged \$15.00 pa
Unwaged \$5.00 pa

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