the meatworker

EDITOR: B Crawford

Live Export.... what's the real cost?

See articles pgs 3 and 13

AMIEU QLD BRANCH
CHRISTMAS 2014 EDITION

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AMIEU Office in East Brisbane

The AMIEU would like to wish its members and their families a safe holiday and a happy New Year.

We would take this opportunity to advise members that our office will close from Christmas Eve and will reopen at 8.00 am on Monday 5 January 2015

Brian Crawford AMIEU Queensland Branch Secretary

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Live export insanity!

Export earnings from processed beef have been very strong in recent times. According to the latest ABS figures for processed beef exports, Australian processors are making a motza. In September 2014, free on board revenue from Australian beef exports was $710 million, a record for any monthly total since figures have been kept. With reference to the same figures, a whopping $6.4 billion has been earned in export revenue from processed beef in the financial year 13/14, easily the best year on record, also by a very long way.

With all that export revenue, value adding in Australia and maintaining Australian jobs, you would think our decision makers in Canberra would be keen to keep the momentum going, right?

Well, NO. Senator Barnaby Joyce has just triumphantly returned from China with the announcement of an "in principle agreement". Senator Joyce is set to export 1 million head of live cattle to China each year forthcoming.

Was it the Chinese clamouring for this deal? Well, the evidence suggests not. Australian processed beef exports to China used to be very small, just a few kilotonnes each year. In the last couple of years those volumes have jumped to a staggering 90 kilotonnes per year. Most experts were suggesting that at this rate of growth, China could take over from Korea as Australia's third largest processed beef export destination.

Therefore we can safely say that the Chinese have no issues with importing processed Australian beef. Why the sudden jump to live export?

"..we can safely say that the Chinese have no issues with importing processed Australian beef. Why the sudden jump to live export?"

In my view, it seems the only intervening factor in the situation seems to have been Senator Joyce and his cohorts. They've probably gone to the Chinese and told them "There is a cheaper and better way of doing this, you know".

Senator Joyce is only interested in looking after what he sees as his constituency – farmers' lobbying groups. It is a shame, as a lot of rural and regional towns that farmers depend on for services only exist because of meat processing facilities. Kill the abattoir and you kill the town.

"...a lot of rural and regional towns that farmers depend on for services only exist because of meat processing facilities. Kill the abattoir and you kill the town."

There are a few other aspects of this dirty deal that need to be canvassed. For a start, Australia's national herd has decreased significantly over the last few years (international demand for Australian processed beef has played a big part in this). We are down from a high of 28 million head just a few years ago to a projected 24.2 million for June 2015. With limited supply, live exporters won't be taking traditional Brahman breeds from far north Queensland, there's every reason to expect they'll be raiding southern sale yards for anything they can get.

This of course is only going to push the price of cattle upwards. The spectacular performance of Australian beef recently is due mainly to its price competitiveness. Drive the price of cattle up and you vapourise that advantage.

Then there are the perennial animal welfare concerns. The Australian government introduced the "ESCAS" standards as its primary means of addressing animal welfare abuses overseas. What we've seen since their introduction is a never ending series of breaches reported. This is generally a six month inquiry conducted by DAFF and the exporter concerned given the equivalent of a slap on the wrist and it's back to business.

Finally, it's with some pleasure that I can advise that the Australian Agricultural Co opened a new abattoir outside of Darwin recently. The Union reached an Enterprise Agreement with this company to cover the operations. It's the first abattoir to be established in Northern Australia in over 40 years. Now Senator Joyce wants to threaten its viability before it's even off the ground.

This facility was previously announced to only cater for the live export rejects in terms of stock. With a pressing need now coming from China, you can bet cattle in the Territory and surrounds will be as rare as hens' teeth and fairly pricey when they are available.

In all, not one positive thing can come from this dirty deal brokered by Senator Joyce with the Chinese, except higher stock prices for his political masters, the farmers. ***But at what cost?*** A loss of export revenue, value adding to the Australian economy and ultimately Australian jobs.

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Matt Journeaux Assistant Branch Secretary

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GET A LIBERAL STATE GOVERNMENT AND A LIBERAL FEDERAL GOVERNMENT?

The current political state of affairs in Queensland is the unfortunate position of having both a Liberal Federal and a Liberal State government in power.

Campbell Newman and his cronies have left a long swath of destruction in their path and they haven't finished yet. If this mob get another term in government working people in Queensland will be much worse off.

Wind it back to the state election in 2012 Anna Bligh had just led Queensland through the toughest natural disasters in its history. This had cost the state a considerable amount of money and in order to make the books balance she proposed to sell some state assets. This was a very unpopular move, voters and the union movement were extremely upset with this option.

The Queensland people voiced their disapproval at the subsequent state election and gave Campbell Newman an unprecedented win with Anna Bligh and her team only being able to secure 7 seats out of 89. Never in the history of the State has a government lost an election so convincingly.

Drunk on the power Campbell Newman and his newly elected parliamentarians embarked on a systematic destruction of all the good initiatives the Labor government had implemented over the last 13 years in power.

"Drunk on the power Campbell Newman and his newly elected parliamentarians embarked on a systematic destruction of all the good initiatives"

Newman systematically sacked 14,000 public sector workers and tore apart WorkCover.

While he sacked 14,000 workers he also froze their wage increases, for the ones that were left, to a maximum of 2% per annum.

Meanwhile he gave his members of parliament an increase of $57,000.00 per year and himself.....$70,000.00 per year. Campbell Newman now gets close to $400,000.00 a year - the same as Barrack Obama. This is a classic example of how there is one rule for him and another for everyone else.

An injured worker now, through no fault of their own, can be too injured to do their job but if they don't have a 6% permanent impairment they have no right to sue their employer. What this means, is a worker can be injured through their employer's negligence and not be able to run a common law damages claim unless they have over 5% (which means 6%) permanent impairment. As I have stated in previous articles I have seen meatworkers careers ended with far less permanent impairment than this.

No Job No Future Campbell doesn't care

The list of mismanagement issues are too long to write but the following are just a few of his finer moments:

- Reject the Gonski review recommendations that would have seen kids get better education funding where needed;
- Threw out the solar subsidy scheme because Stanwell power station had to reduce generation. (that was the whole idea about Solar) I wonder how much coal mining companies contribute to his election campaigns?
- Axed the office of climate change;
- Axed the mobile breast screening scheme;
- Cut funding to aboriginal health;
- Spent $1.2 Billion dollars of tax payer's money on building the "Tower of Power" complete with its own secret tunnel to prevent his parliamentary colleagues having to fraternise with the general public;
- Cut the $10.00 rebate for pensioners to get their lawns mowed;
- Closed the only mental health facility for teenagers with severe mental health issues;
- Sold the Clem 7 tunnel for $618 million dollars when it cost $3 billion to build;
- Introduced the VLAD Act that can see electricians and plumbers licences cancelled just because they associate with bikies;
- Changed the law to allow his Attorney General Jarrod Bleijie to overrule a Supreme Court judge;
- Spent over $14 million dollars of tax payer's money on selling his "Smart Choices" Initiatives.

Unfortunately this list just goes on and on.

This government is treating workers like fools.

The Newman government learned from what happened to Anna Bligh and has deceived the electorate by saying he won't sell assets but lease them!!!!!!!

Can you imagine what will be left after a private company leases our electricity infrastructure?

What an absolute load of rubbish! Can you imagine what it will be like after a private company leases it for 100 years? It won't be worth a cracker and you and me have paid $14,000,000 for the privilege of being lied to... **WELL DONE CAMPBELL.**

"Can you imagine what it will be like after a private company leases it for 100 years?"

That's right, those annoying ads on television we have all been bombarded with "SMART CHOICES" have cost you and me, the taxpayer, $14 million. What a waste!

However, the gloss seems to have well and truly worn off with LNP candidates in both Stafford and Dickson copping an absolute flogging.

Federally we are in a similar boat with Abbott and Hockey trying to whip up some make believe financial crisis while our economy remained the envy of the world.

Australia owes 12% of its GDP (Gross Domestic Product) and most other developed economies owe 75% of GDP. Without borrowings Australia stagnates and stops. The current unemployment rate in Queensland is 6.5% the highest it has been in 30 years.

Big bold projects like the NBN have been shelved and anyone wanting to access it will have to pay about $4,000.00. Australia has some of the slowest internet speeds in the world and the NBN would have made business in Australia so much more competitive.

As a side consequence we would have been able to hook up to pay TV through an American provider for a tenth of the price than here in Australia. It makes you wonder how much that had a bearing on the decisions made.

These are just some prime examples of an inept government lying and cheating and looking after their mates in business.

Tony Abbott too has learnt from mistakes of previous governments and instead of attacking workers (like John Howard did through WorkChoices) he is attacking unions through bogus royal commissions and regulatory controls. The Heydon Commission has been extended for 12 months because they could not find enough dirt on unions. This is a massive expense to the taxpayer and unions alike.

Unfortunately employers seem to grow another foot taller in these environments. A classic example is the Teys/Cargill dispute and I am sure they would not have been so keen if the political environment had not been so good for them.

Read Elliott Dalgliesh's comprehensive article on this (page 7).

So whether we like it or not politics rules our lives.

These lunatics got into power because disgruntled workers voted for them.

I sincerely hope all workers have now seen these fools for what they are and will never make the same mistake in the future.

The state election will probably be in March 2015 - let's send Newman and his mates packing!

On a brighter note I would like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

I hope everyone has been good and Santa comes to all.

Campbell Newman has repeatedly broken promises to the Queensland people.

Image courtesy RedFlag.org.au

Abbott's Royal Commission Failing to Come up With the Goods

".....royal commissions and similar investigations are in the first place political instruments used by the government of the day for its own ends. Be that to exculpate itself, to nail political enemies ..."

Borchardt, D.H., 1991, Commissions of Inquiry in Australia

Despite a budget of $60 million dollars of taxpayers' money, 57 public hearings across the country and 200 witnesses, what have we really gotten out of the Heydon Royal Commission into Trade Unions?

Well, surprise, surprise, there's problems with the Health Services Union. But Fair Work Australia and the Police were already investigating these matters. Therefore the value add of the Royal Commission has effectively been **NIL** (unless of course you're a Liberal Party media spin doctor and can keep it running in the media cycle for just that little bit longer).

It took the Abbott government just five days to respond to a request from the Heydon Royal Commission to extend its inquiries. However it took two months for the same government to respond to a request from an inquiry into child sexual abuse. Twisted priorities?

Of course, Tony Abbott promptly extended the life of this Kangaroo Court to 2016. Is it just a coincidence that there's an election due that year?

We've recently seen industry superannuation funds attacked. The bottom line of the attack? Union representatives have no right to be on superannuation boards overseeing and protecting workers' money.

Despite Mr Abbott's assurances that the Commission would be a sword that "cuts both ways" against employers, evidence of corporate misbehaviour has been rejected or treated with contempt.

Extensive evidence exists of companies in the construction industry going broke owing workers extensive entitlements and the next day a "phoenix" company being registered by the same scoundrels to start business again. It's a phenomenon that has also occurred in the meat industry.

As at 12 November 2014, Safe Work Australia report that there have been 147 work fatalities in Australia. 147 ordinary people with families, dependants and loved ones who have lost everything.

"What about introducing a crime of Industrial Manslaughter for employers?"

And all Tony Abbott and his political stooges can obsess about is a few Trade Union officials sitting on superannuation boards. What about introducing a crime of Industrial Manslaughter for employers? If you drive a car negligently and kill someone, you can be charged with manslaughter and possibly go to jail. Operate a business negligently and kill someone and you can generally expect to skip away with a fine of between $20 000 and $50 000. It's a cheap insult for a workers life.

We all need to recognise Royal Commissions for what they are – a cheap disguise for a political attack launched by and tightly controlled by the government of the day for one purpose – a desperate attempt to try to secure its re-election.

Lee Norris
AMIEU
Industrial
Officer

Elliott Dalgleish AMIEU Industrial Officer

Teys Australia Beenleigh Pty Ltd Production Departments Enterprise Agreement 2013

Background

Teys included in the roll of voters a number of trainee supervisors (17 in total) and other persons (4 in total) who were not, in the union's view, entitled to vote on the agreement. The amount of non-eligible voters clearly could have affected the result.

Further, the new agreement cut workers' pays by between 6% and 13%.

Similarly, the profit share scheme at the Beenleigh plant was not incorporated as a term of the 2013 Agreement and its application is solely at Teys Australia discretion, with no binding obligations or transparency attaching to it.

1st Full Bench Appeal – Decision [2014] FWCFB 1313

On 4 March 2014, FWC President, Justice Iain Ross, Deputy President Anne Gooley and Commissioner Leigh Johns quashed Deputy President Asbury's decisions of 27 September 2013 and 4 October 2013 to approve the agreement finding that Deputy President Asbury was wrong to conclude that employees who will likely be covered are entitled to vote on the agreement under s181(1) of the Fair Work Act 2009.

In addition, Deputy President Asbury's decision making was in error by taking into consideration *"anteriorly derived notions of what would be fair or sensible"* which are irrelevant to the task of construing the Agreement.

On 25 March 2014, the FWC ordered that the decision and approval decision of Deputy President Asbury issued on 27 September 2013 in matter AG2013/8000 be quashed.

The application was remitted back to Deputy President Asbury with her task to determine who *will be covered* by the Agreement by reference to the terms of the Agreement, and in particular clause 1.3 (coverage clause) and clause 3.1 (classifications clause).

2nd Full Bench Appeal – Decision [2014] FWCFB 5643

On 18 September 2014, the majority of the Full Bench, Senior Deputy President Jennifer Acton and Commissioner Chris Simpson, with SDP Richards in dissent, quashed Deputy President Asbury's decision of 10 April 2014 to approve the agreement, as Deputy President Asbury had wrongly found that the 21 employees were covered by the agreement, incorrectly applied the principal purpose test, and wrongly held that the agreement had been *genuinely agreed* to by the employees to be covered.

AMIEU Position

We say:

- Only employees who *will be covered* can vote for and validly approve an agreement.
- The Act provides that employees employed at the time who will be covered by the agreement approve the agreement have voted for it.
- The agreement is invalid because persons other than those who were identified as those who will be covered have participated in the voting process.

Future proceedings in respect of the undertakings issue

The commission has now called upon Teys to provide undertakings to enable the commission to approve the agreement.

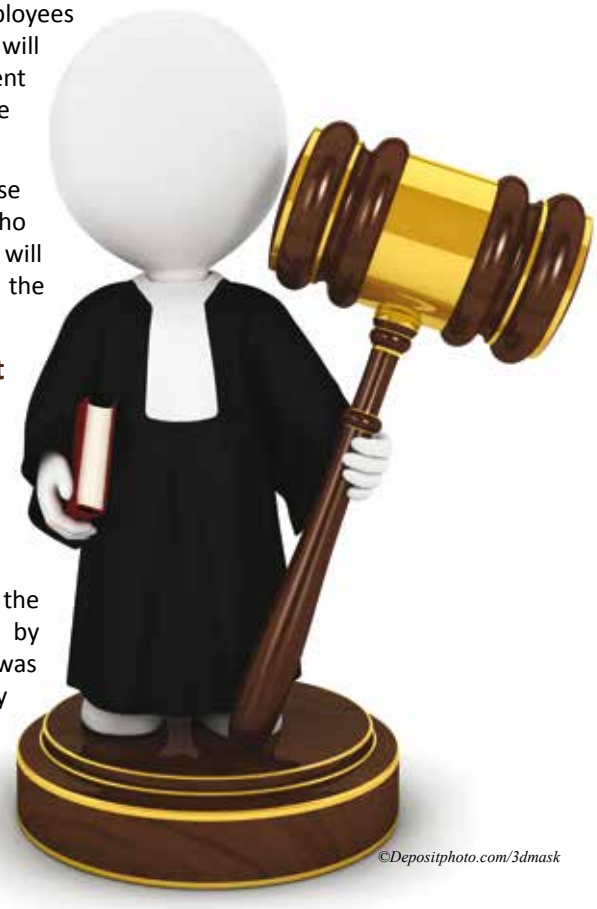
The union's submission is that the agreement cannot be cured by undertakings. This position was foreshadowed by the majority in the Full Bench decision: *The Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union v Teys Australia Beenleigh Pty Ltd* [2014] FWCFB 5643.

Full Court of the Federal Court Hearing

The matter will now be heard before the Full Court of the Federal Court on 24 November 2014.

In these current proceedings before the Full Court the parties are seeking:

- a determination on whether the 1st said Full Bench decision and Order were affected by jurisdictional error; and
- a declaration in relation to the result, order and effect of the 1st said Full Bench decision by which the FWC ordered the decision and approval decision be quashed.



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Dawn Crisafulli AMIEU Branch Organiser

Another Christmas is on its way. Strangely, the days seem to be going at a reasonable pace, although the weeks seem to be getting faster!

Around the sheds there has been plenty going on.

Ingham's Murarrie - The good news is that most of the issues we were having in the last Meatworker edition have resolved in an amicable way. The electronic payslip matter has been resolved and an additional computer is now in the red area.

We have had more movement with transfers, they now seem to be not taking as long as they were.

As some of you may know Ingham's has now become self-insured which means if you get injured at work, instead of applying to WorkCover, you now apply to the self-insurers which are set up in the OHS area.

However, we have had a few concerns regarding Doctors certificates and the patient/Doctor confidentiality. Discussions with management, the Joint Consultative Committee and the Union has resolved this issue. If you are having any problems with this issue have a chat to your Delegate; they will be more than happy to help out.

I would like to congratulate Des Pennefather our newest Delegate on PM shift in Despatch and Roger Bullock who has taken over Ruth's position of Delegate on the AM shift. Both of these Delegates are very experienced and it is good to see them put up their hands to step up into these positions. Congrats to Tracey Robertson for becoming a Delegate for the AM wholebirds position as well. Thanks guys!

The Inghams processing plant at Byron Bay has now been shut down with some of the workers relocating to Murarrie. There has also been a new group of boners set up to do the three bird roast over the Christmas period. These workers are casuals and work under the Inghams Murarrie and Hemmant EBA. They will be on site while this shed is undertaking the specialty boning. Our hope is that the long term employees get a chance to learn this boning method in the future.

Over the G20 weekend the new live bird gassing system was installed. Instead of the chickens going through electrified water to stun them for the killing process the birds will now be gassed for five minutes. This does not kill the birds although it does render them unconscious. This process is irreversible which means that the chickens are unconscious for about 20 minutes. For the birds involved this is a more humane process for them.

Ingham's Hemmant - There have been a few issues going on in this shed, but thankfully most of these problems have been fixed reasonably quickly. Work has been a bit up and down, however, the aim is with Christmas coming that the orders will pick up and everything will run smoothly through the holiday period.

Inghams Cleveland - We seemed to have a bit of an upturn in production earlier this year and for a couple of months the people were getting some good hours coming their way. Things seem to be spiralling downwards again with the long range forecast not looking so good.

There is talk that this shed will be upgrading to "robopackers" in the annexe come mid next year. Management is telling us that this will reduce staff in the annexe as they will only be requiring three people to run this area efficiently.

Cleveland has also started doing par-cooked product in the hope that this will pick up production.

Baiada Wulkuraka - Things are travelling well at this site. There have been very few major issues with these being dealt with quickly and easily.

EBA negotiations start early next year as the EBA will expire 30 June 2015. There will be a survey coming out soon and we are interested to hear your feedback.

The drive to change over everyone to direct debit is running well, there is now only a small portion of the workers left on payroll deductions and we hope to change the rest of them over before we start on the EBA.

Our JCC meetings have been a little bit of a challenge over the last couple of months. However, we are looking forward to these meetings coming together and helping to inform the workers of any changes coming up in the workplace.

Golden Cockerel - As always we keep hoping that the workers will realise that there is strength in unity at this site. This EBA will expire on 30 June 2015 as well. We want all the workers to know that the best way to get a good EBA outcome, is to have everyone pitch in and support the Union.

As the Union is the representative for negotiations on site, Union support is vital as the EBA process relies on the people banding together to make sure that the negotiation's results get the workers the best pay rise and work conditions possible.

Sadly, without the support from people, our chances for a great outcome dwindle enormously.

A big thanks to all the Delegates, I would like you to know that you are VERY much appreciated.

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Ian "Macca" McLauchlan AMIEU Branch Organiser

"Firstly, I would like to wish members and their families all the best for Christmas and a great New Year."

-Macca

Many thanks to all works officials from the plants I service for the hard work and support throughout the year. Where did 2014 go? There is an old saying – the older we get the quicker the years go!

Oakey Abattoir

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate our Butchers Picnic Committee at Oakey led by Heath (Billy) and Karl (Nutsy). They did a great job organising the Butchers Picnic celebrations! It is a real family day which is supported by the Union's members and their families. It would be great to see other plants also use this day as it was originally intended. *Butchers' Picnic a family fun day.*

The plant is running quite well since the new EBA. The 4 out of 5 day roster system is being used in the boning room which appears to be working well. A lot of our members like only having to work four (4) days. The kill floor and other areas have stayed on 7.6 hour days and a 5 day week, however this may change in the future with drought conditions. The plant is working every Saturday until the Christmas close down. With extremely dry conditions we are seeing an influx of cattle coming on the market which is causing most works to do overtime and work Saturdays.

JBS Beef City (Toowoomba)

This plant works consistently all year round due to the feedlot. They are also working some Saturdays before the Christmas close down. Shed elections have been completed and we have a lot of new delegates who are very keen. A training morning was organised at the Toowoomba Trades Hall on a Saturday which was very well received, I believe delegates took a lot away from it. Apart from some day to day issues this plant runs along very well.

Canterbury Meats (Warwick)

Our Union consistently received calls from workers at this site requesting to join the AMIEU (Meat Union). As a consequence we started to service the plant this year. On-site delegates have been elected and I am pleased to report that our membership is growing with each visit. Since having membership at this plant we have been able to assist them with their issues. With consistent servicing of this plant I believe our membership here will continue to grow.

Thomas Foods (Wallangarra)

Since Thomas Foods has taken this plant over we have seen a lot more steady work for our members. In addition to this the Aldi Supermarket lamb order has also been a real positive for the plant. Thomas Foods uses a lot of 417 workers. One of the many challenges facing our Union is how best to communicate with these workers? I am sure they would be like most other workers, have workplace issues and need advice on how to handle these issues.

Baiada Mareeba

This poultry plant has excellent works officials who handle all member issues onsite as they arise. I visited the plant in October and I must say the members at this plant make you feel very welcome. They are always pleased to receive reports on general happenings in our industry.

I would like to share a story on three Filipino members who were 457 visa workers employed at Kilcoy Pastoral Company. Their four year visa was getting to its expiry and they believed their employer (Kilcoy Pastoral Company) was going to renew their 457 visas. However, 21 days before their visa was to expire the company advised our members that they were not renewing their visas! These workers contacted the Union. The Union was able to assist the 457 workers who are now happily employed at another abattoir with new visas.

The important point to this story is if those international workers were not members of the Union then they most certainly would have been sent home to the Philippines.

It pays to be a member!

AMIEU members: Roderick Quijano, Ruben Estodillo and Francisco Orida appreciated the Union's help in finding them a new sponsor.

Warren Earle AMIEU Branch Organiser

Woolworths Brismeat

Since July this year the AMIEU and the Enterprise Bargaining Committee have been negotiating an EBA with Brismeat management. The Committee has been solidly committed to negotiating strongly with the company to get the best possible outcome for all members.

Negotiations were to commence in February this year (2014) approximately three (3) months before the current agreement expired on 18 May 2014.

The company tabled their Log of Claims in July 2014 which (if accepted) would mean wholesale changes to the current enterprise agreement, a position which is totally unacceptable to the Union and the negotiating Committee.

The Committee has been steadfast in retaining their conditions and as a consequence the company has dropped off the majority of their claims.

Woolworths' profits have been soaring. Their last financial reports published on 28 February were boasting a net after tax profit of $1.32 billion up a whopping 14.5%! Any fair-minded person would think the people who generate those profits should be rewarded with a fair pay increase. Negotiations are continuing.

JBS Dinmore

It's been a full and busy year at this site with record numbers of cattle being processed. The afternoon shift moved from a fixed four day to a rotating 4 out of 5 day shift which has not caused too many issues with there still being plenty of overtime. Early reports show that next year is looking to replicate this one, which would be welcoming news to the workers.

As the year ends we turn to 2015 to start focusing on the negotiation for a new EBA. To enable the Union and the Committee to have a strong voice at the negotiating table it is important to have a high level of Union membership. Workers need to keep in mind we now have a conservative Government determined to press ahead with its right wing ideologies of disempowering workers. So far changes sought to Industrial Relations have been stalled through the Senate. The Palmer United Party has shown it can be unpredictable in their policy decision making so we will have to wait to see what next year brings.

There is only one voice for the workers and that is the Unions. No other body or group continually press the case for workers' rights. Without that voice, workers' rights will go with it. The AMIEU encourages all members to communicate with their workmates who are not in the Union and remind them of the importance of being a member.

Churchill Abattoir

The Union recently discovered that some workers at this site were being paid less than the Modern Award under a flexibility arrangement.

Workers at the Churchill site were deceived into thinking they were being paid fairly. The subsequent actions of the company when challenged by the Union in relation to the underpayments should highlight to workers the power the employer has over them when they do not have a signed, registered agreement.

It has been nearly two years since the workers at Churchill have received a pay increase. They have been told by the company that there will not be a pay increase until December 2015. Meanwhile, cost of living increases and workers go backwards. This is a great example of an employer only interested in profits and not in its employees.

"It has been nearly two years since the workers at Churchill have received a pay increase"

Hans/Primo Wacol

The EBA has been in place since 2012 and unfortunately we are still experiencing problems with employees not being placed into their correct classification.

To date, I have assisted over 100 members in obtaining upgrades to the correct payrate. I have also assisted many members from being downgraded.

I find it somewhat unusual that after two years of the EBA being in place that these issues are still arising. However, the AMIEU will continue to ensure that our members are remunerated in accordance with the duties they perform as we are fortunate enough to have a strong support base of industrial staff to assist when these issues arise.

Ronnie Weston AMIEU Recruitment Officer

Since the last edition of the Meatworker I have been very active visiting sites and recruiting. I have made two trips to the Central Region and in conjunction with the Organisers I attended JBS, Teys Rocky and Teys Biloela sites.

From a recruitment perspective I believe the trips were very successful. However, there is no doubt the major obstacle we face when recruiting is the language barrier with migrant workers. One plant in Rockhampton has over 20 different languages being spoken. We cannot let that stop us getting the message out there, being that the best way to protect your working conditions is to be a Union member.

A minor dispute occurred at Teys sites when we were refused entry unless we surrendered our mobile phones and any Union literature - to which we objected. The matter was ultimately resolved by conciliation in the Fair Work Commission.

In conjunction with my recruiting duties I assisted with EBA negotiations at Beef City, Oakey, ACC and Brismeats.

I personally made a couple of trips up to the new abattoir in the Northern Territory – AACo's Northern Australian Beef Processing Plant. At the time the plant was going through the commissioning stages with only a small workforce. While there, we addressed the workers and signed up a few members which was encouraging. I look forward to building up our membership at this site in the future.

Don't forget, if you would like the recruitment van to visit your site (or to meet close to your worksite) so that you are able to discuss any workplace issues, or if members would like to rollover to our Direct Debit payment option, be sure to contact your Organiser today!

Rob Barton AMIEU Branch Organiser

AUSTRALIAN COUNTRY CHOICE

This facility predominately produces product for Coles with a growing processing section. Two agreements exist on plant, those being a Slaughter and Bone Agreement and a Manufacturing Agreement. Both agreements expired in June of this year. The Committee and Union sought to begin bargaining for both agreements in February of this year. ACC finally began negotiations for Kill and Bone at the end of June, with Manufacturing beginning in July.

Many meetings have occurred for both agreements with some twists and turns along the way. Recently negotiations have stalled and this has frustrated the members who rightly believe that the Committee and the Union have bargained in good faith. In consultation with the members, the Committee advised the Union to apply for Protected Action Ballots for both sections, in the belief that with the upcoming holiday period, negotiations would be further stalled.

At the time of writing, these applications have been lodged, with the result being a renewed sense of urgency from the company and meetings scheduled almost immediately. Hopefully we can come to a final position sooner rather than later, with an agreement that both the members and the company feel comfortable with.

GREENMOUNTAIN-COOMINYA

The Collective Employee Agreement that currently exists at this facility expired in November 2014. This agreement was negotiated five years ago with no Union involvement and contains many inferior conditions and pay rates, including an attendance bonus that forms part of the wages. The members are looking forward to correcting many inadequacies in this document.

To date, there have been four EBA meetings, with the company refusing to take on board any of the Union's Log of Claims and ignoring most of the input from the Committee members. Now the company has come to the conclusion that the Committee is happy with a virtually unaltered agreement and will put that agreement to a vote shortly. Naturally the Union has circulated a newsletter headed "VOTE NO"! It's worth remembering that nothing worthwhile is achieved without a struggle. When we all stand together we will prevail.

AUSTRALIAN FOOD CORPORATION COOMINYA

An agreement was recently voted on, and got up by 14 votes to 51. Unfortunately this is a classic case of limited Union involvement resulting in an inferior agreement. The two main points that were of concern to our members were:

- Casuals receive 50 cents an hour less than permanents. Casuals make up over 50% of the workforce; and
- No 17.5% loading on holiday pay. Permanents do receive a yearly bonus with restrictions which include attendance.

I would like to thank the small but committed membership at this site for trying to educate the rest of the workforce.

STANBROKE GRANTHAM

Some very sad news to report. Kill floor delegate, Jeremy Frederiksen, tragically passed away recently. Jeremy was in his early 30's with a young family. Our deepest sympathies go out to Jeremy's family. As Jeremy was a long time employee, the Butchers Picnic was moved to accommodate the large number of employees who wished to attend the funeral. The news at this site doesn't get much better with our long-time Shed President being terminated under conflicting circumstances. At time of writing the Union has made an Unfair Dismissal claim and I will keep the members informed.

TEYS-CARGILL BEENLEIGH

After many, many months we are starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel. It is testament to the long suffering members who have held on, in the belief that justice will prevail. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Industrial Relations team who have worked tirelessly on this case. You will find a comprehensive article on this matter on page 7.

SUPERANNUATION!

It recently came to light that some members have not had their Superannuation payments deposited to their superannuation fund, with one member also losing extra contributions that were being made on a weekly basis. The Union informed the members to immediately get in contact with the Australian Taxation Office and report the matter. Super payments are mandatory and must be paid on a regular basis, not when the employer feels like it.

James Cottrell-Dormer AMIEU Branch Organiser

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Coles EBA update

The Coles EBA negotiations which have been taking place over the last seven (7) months have taken a significant turn. The AMIEU, nationally, has taken a fair approach to negotiations, looking to secure an agreement which applies nationally to meat workers, standardising and simplifying conditions across the country.

The AMIEU has proposed only to retain existing conditions applying to meat workers around the country in the current state based agreements, with some states even conceding to reduce hard won conditions in the interest of presenting a realistic and simple national solution for Coles to consider.

The sad reality is that Coles has never considered making a national meat agreement. Coles wants all store workers to fall under a National Retail Agreement which they hope will be agreed to by other bargaining parties at the table and may be voted on positively by the wider store workers. Coles proposed position for the National Retail Agreement, this time contrary to previous agreements, presents no significant loss of conditions to store workers other than meat workers. It must be said that although the store workers have not lost anything significant at negotiations, they have gained little of significance either - no fair compensation for un-sociable hours, no right to a fair share of weekends off, no limit to the amount of roster changes and the list goes on.

Coles is only interested in reducing the conditions of meat unit workers across the country by grandfathering existing workers and using a term it refers to as "preserve and absorb" to reduce the earnings of some meat employee's over time. A more honest term would be "wage freeze". Coles knows the AMIEU would not accept these losses and Coles is therefore hoping to put a National Retail Agreement to the vote and rely on the numbers of store workers and the support of the SDA to have their agreement voted up.

The AMIEU has repeatedly asked Coles at bargaining "what would it take for the company to consider making a national meat agreement". Coles is refusing to respond to this question leaving the AMIEU to conclude there is nothing the company is willing to consider.

> "Coles is only interested in reducing the conditions of meat unit workers across the country"

The AMIEU has therefore had to review its bargaining position nationally and will be pursuing state based agreements. This allows the members in states where agreements have expired, to take protected industrial action should Coles continue to ignore meat worker's claims. Unfortunately the members hands are tied in States with agreements still in place (NSW/ ACT, WA, SA), as until their agreements expire they cannot take protected industrial action. Instead, these members will be asked to provide support to their interstate comrades in any action taken.

Woolworths EBA negotiations commence

Negotiations for a new national agreement for Woolworths employees have begun in Sydney on the 12th & 13th of November. The Company has already flagged it will be looking for drastic changes to hours of work and rostering arrangements, which can best be described as the casualisation of permanent working hours, giving the company almost limitless flexibility when rostering permanent workers.

The AMIEU has presented a log of claims, compiled by a recent survey of members and plans to pursue them rigorously. It is important to note that many of the AMIEU claims are virtually identical to those of other bargaining representatives. The AMIEU hopes to strengthen member's claims by supporting any common position put forward.

A recent argument with Woolworths over the introduction of retail ready meats into stores and the lack of consultation afforded to members when positions were made redundant, has ended with a satisfactory outcome for all members involved. The AMIEU is looking to address this issue further at EBA talks in the hope of preventing similar issues arising in future.

For more general retail news check out the wins for the worker section for trending problems and resolutions (PAGE 15).

REMEMBER, IT PAYS TO BE A MEMBER OF THE AMIEU!

Paul Jensen AMIEU Branch Organiser

As the year 2014 comes to an end we will have record numbers through our plants. JBS Townsville, JBS Rockhampton, Teys Rockhampton and Teys Biloela have not had many industrial issues this year and are full steam ahead well into December. They are working overtime and still doing Saturday overtime. The big issue is not now with the record kills, but in five years time – where are we going to source the cattle to kill?

The entire Australian beef industry is to be affected by live trade to China. The proposed export of live cattle to China is expected to have a major effect on all aspects of Australia's beef industry including our abattoirs. While the deal is yet to be finalised (at the time of writing this article) the Federal Government has strongly indicated that it is imminent and could be announced by the time our members receive this Meatworker. Uncertainty remains over just how many cattle are likely to be exported to China each year with reports varying from tens of thousands of dollars to millions of dollars. Federal Trade Minister, Andrew Robb, says more work needs to be done before a cattle export deal is struck with China although he expects a free trade agreement to be finalised within days.

It was revealed last week that Australia is negotiating a deal to export $1 billion worth of live cattle to China every year. The deal to send live cattle to China has been in the works for the past decade but discussions about health standards have been a sticking point. Previously, China has rejected cattle from Northern Australia based on issues surrounding diseases like blue tongue (a virus that gives the animals a fever). A starting point could be 30-40,000 head and then move to 1 million per year, the size of the deal, with that amount then doubling Australia's existing live cattle exports, currently approximately one million cattle.

The gap between a really good beast and a cow is tightening up. It used to be quite a large gap and now the live exporters are pushing that market up quite high. Once you start talking a million head I don't think the grades are really going to matter, they are just going to have to buy as many cattle as they can. I think every abattoir is going to be fighting for cattle at some point in the future. We saw that some months back after a little bit of rain in Queensland and Victoria – the cattle market went up - and it will only get worse if this goes ahead. The demand for beef is being felt at saleyard level with an increased number of buyers going direct to producers to lock in supplies. I think it is going to make it a lot more competitive to buy livestock. The increased demand is also tipped to flow through to the consumer. Blind Freddy would have to say that it is going to lift up the prices dramatically from where they are at the moment. Local prices for beef, you would have to think, would increase over time as well. They, the live exporters, have not got the numbers currently, but in five years time anything can happen.

The growth in Queensland through to 30 June 2011 was underpinned by two very wet years with the State's herd standing at a record 12.8 million head. While Queensland, the Northern Territory and the southern states have faced variable seasonal conditions, with droughts and flooding throughout the five year period, for 2013 and beyond the herd expansion is expected to continue (albeit at a diminishing rate) there are some major factors that could constrain, or even reverse, the forecast herd growth for coming years is obvious and is a return to widespread drought conditions, especially for major cattle regions of Northern NSW, Queensland and Northern Territory.

The Australian live cattle export trade will influence the herd prospects if they can send up to two million out of the country.

If that many cattle leave our shores and droughts and floods wreak havoc on our country, there will be reduced cattle numbers to process. I hope in five years time it is not doom and gloom for the abattoirs with our cattle going live instead of boxed.

You only have to look at what has happened at the abattoirs in Victoria with the live sheep export trade and the closure of all the meatworks there.

I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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Rewind

Have you ever wondered what a meatworkers life was like in the 80s? Thanks to AMIEU Life Member Claude Dougan we can rewind time and have a look at some great photos!

wins for the worker!

Underpayments recovered for members:

- Over $3,500 for a member underpaid over a 2 year period!
- $4,800 in unpaid wages and super over a 2 1/2 year period
- $600 in underpayments to an apprentice recovered
- Over $12,000 recovered in unpaid Super for a group of 5 members
- $16,400 recovered for a member in unpaid wages, super and entitlements on termination
- $5,700 recovered for an apprentice paid incorrectly as a school based apprentice

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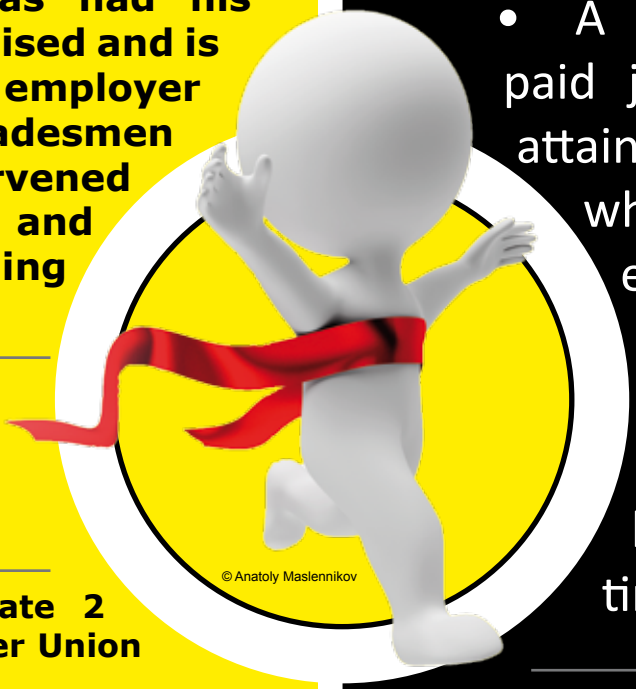
A member held back in his apprenticeship by his employer as a way of maintaining cheaper labour, has had his apprenticeship finalised and is working for a new employer as a qualified tradesmen after the Union intervened with the employer and his registered training organisation.

Support provided to numerous members on resolving workplace injury claims.

A decision to terminate 2 members reversed after Union intervention.

A dispute over unreasonable rostered hours resolved in favour of our member.

Two members had support in disputes over pro-rata long service leave not being paid when resigning their employment due to poor health, both resolved in favour of members.



- *An apprentice forced to perform work outside of the tasks prescribed in his training contract had his apprenticeship put back on track with Union intervention.*

- A member being paid junior wages after attaining a qualification which should have elevated his pay to adult wages has had his position elevated and been back paid for the time.

- **Successful redeployment negotiated for a group of members when jobs made redundant.**

ELECTED BRANCH OFFICIALS

Branch President
Keith Haslem
JBS Australia - Dinmore

Branch Vice-President
Ronnie Weston, Oakey Abattoir

Branch Treasurer
Mick Ainsworth, Teys Biloela

Branch Secretary
Brian Crawford

Assistant Branch Secretary
Matt Journeaux

Representatives to Branch Committee of Management

Kristine Allen
Baiada Wulkuraka

Mary Bateson
Inghams Murarrie

Tori Bell
JBS Toowoomba

Darryl McKey
Cannon Hill Services

Dave Phillips
JBS Dinmore

Kim Prange
Teys Beenleigh

Greville Sexton
JBS Rockhampton

Glen De Git
Teys Biloela

Noel Meiers
Teys Rockhampton

Fred Brunjes
Baiada Mareeba

Neil Kemp
Thomas Borthwicks Mackay

Tiffany Kerle
JBS Townsville

9 Children's Hospital TELETHON

A huge thank you to all our members who make payroll deduction donations to the Children's Hospital Foundation.

The AMIEU was proud to be a part of the 2014 Children's Hospital Telethon and we are elated to say that because of the money that you, our members, donate from your pay each week the AMIEU was able to hand over a cheque for $170,000 to help sick kids!

This is a phenomenal result for an awesome charity. Again, thank you, without your support this would not be possible.

Check out our website (www.amieuqld.asn.au) to see a highlight reel from the televised event!