

Paul Bastian, AMWU National Secretary

QLD MEMBERS SOLID AGAINST AURIZON BULLYING

Queensland members at rail giant Aurizon are staying strong as the AMWU fights back against the potential loss of workplace conditions due to a Fair Work Commission decision to terminate their enterprise agreements rights.

Rail unions this week launched a Federal Court appeal to reverse the ruling which strips members of protections against forced redundancy, giving employers open slather on deciding rosters and dictating when leave can be taken.

The FWC decision throwing Aurizon members back to the base rail industry award has emboldened management, which last week withdrew an offer on a new union agreement which seemed ready to deliver members their first pay rise since 2013.

Queensland Assistant Secretary Terry Bradley said that Aurizon's offer of 4 per cent annually for a three-year-agreement had brought the long-running talks to the brink of resolution, but Aurizon had suddenly lowered this. "Our delegates were appalled by the sudden about face and remain determined to show management they cannot disrespect their workforce, in workplaces and in the courts," he said. The Fair Work Commission last month



agreed with Aurizon that it should not be bound by existing enterprise agreements because they dated from before the company's privatisation by Queensland's Government in 2010 and did not reflect private rail freight industry standards.

Within days of that FWC decision Aurizon brought forward 150 redundancies at its Redbank workshops, which it will close.

Mr Bradley said the union would now consider industrial action against Aurizon, to be decided by members.

"Members can be proud of staying united in resisting Aurizon's push for an inferior agreement. We'll keep negotiating," he said.

The ACTU believes the FWC ruling must be overturned because it set a dangerous national precedent that workers could be automatically relegated to award conditions once their previous agreement expired.

A senior AMWU Aurizon delegate, Bernie Misztal, said there was concern the company might now bring forward the closure of its Townsville operation with 50 jobs from next year.

"Management are going full steam to alienate their remaining workforce, so they really should think if this is the smartest way to treat their most valuable asset," he said.

DELEGATES ROLLING ON RAIL

Inspired by recent wins in Victoria, rail delegates from NSW and Queensland are on track for a national campaign to maximise manufacturing and maintenance jobs after a key meeting this week.

The workshop of delegates resolved that action in the community was the most effective in putting heat on politicians for local jobs and procurement.

Delegates are campaigning for all state governments to co-operate on a strategy

to ensure work for rail manufacturers and parts supply businesses.

There are ongoing challenges to the Australian rail industry, including:

- the lack of apprentices to replace skills of retiring workers

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DELEGATES ROLLING ON RAIL

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- needing to keep the pressure on all politicians not take ALP support for granted
- reversing the Abbott Government's willful neglect of rail investment versus roads
- Bringing rail employers, unions and the community together in alliances for campaigning
- ensuring maintenance of any imported rolling stock is done by local workers

Mark Pearce and Shaun Goss were elected as the NSW Rail Committee Conveners, with Ivan Rees and Daniel Thompson taking on the Queensland roles.

National Secretary Paul Bastian reminded delegates of the role our members play in campaigns and their role in motivating members and ensuring the AMWU was the union voice of rail.

Dave Armstrong - delegate from Alstom, Victoria - told how their community action in Victoria had pressured major parties at the state election to compete on promises for local rail builds.

Better use of taxpayer's money and local unemployment had captured voters' attention and opened the doors to meeting Ministers.



Up to speed: rail shop delegates from NSW and Queensland in Sydney this week where they planned a new campaign to promote Australian manufacture and maintenance of rolling stock.

National rail co-ordinator Finbarr Dowling said the NSW-Queensland workshop found common ground with a meeting of Victorian-SA-WA delegates in March.

Delegates discussed building on campaigning by NSW Hunter members to deter the re-elected Baird Government from wasting \$2.8 billion of taxpayers money on an overseas build of 65 new trains.

In Queensland, it was important the new Labor Government committed to all maintenance for 75 new suburban trains being done by Australians rather than imported company workers, despite the Newman regime spending \$4.4 billion to have the stock built in India.

FAIR GO LONG OVERDUE FOR OVERTIME

Do you wonder whether those extra overtime hours the boss pressured you to work were really worth it? Well, this week the union kicked off a legal campaign for better overtime conditions.

The union is running a case in the Fair Work Commission aimed at ensuring that if an employer wants you to do overtime and promises time-in-lieu in return, then that must be calculated in line with the appropriate penalty rate – not hour for hour.

This means more in your pay packet for working after hours.

AMWU Industrial Officer Michael Nguyen put the case that for your first three hours of overtime you should get time and a half, then double the time worked after that, whether

you were paid in money or by time-in-lieu.

Mr Nguyen put the argument as part of modernising the awards covering manufacturing, printing and graphic arts, food and beverage, the sugar industry and aircraft maintenance.

The union backed up our case with the story of Perth printing apprentice Zach Carleton, whose evidence about his boss asking him to do overtime will resonate with many members.

"I did not accept the invitation," he explained to the Commission.

"I thought that time-off-in-lieu was not a fair exchange for working overtime. If the time-off-in-lieu was at the overtime penalty rate, I might have considered the request."

Some employers also deliberately stall on

allowing their workers to take time-in-lieu, instead saving it up to allocate at a time when orders and production was slow in order to get a double financial advantage.

National Vehicles Division Assistant Secretary Warren Butler said this was a hard reality in many smaller auto workshops and parts producers – and it had to change.

"It suits the employer to dictate when time in lieu will be taken, but that's at the cost of convenience for an employee's personal life and goes against the spirit of the award," he said.

"That's not what overtime is about, fairness has to work both ways."

A decision by a Full Bench the Fair Work Commission on our claim is expected in coming months.

WORKPLACE GENDER EQUALITY REPORT

The AMWU reports to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, on gender equality in the workplace, specifically equal remuneration between women and men and the family and caring responsibilities of women and men are central to achieving gender equality.

We have now lodged our report with the Agency for this year.

The AMWU takes this responsibility very seriously and are striving to not only achieve this in our workplace, but in the workplaces of the members that we represent.

If you are a financial member of the AMWU, and would like a copy of our report for the 2014-2015 year, please email:

mike.nicolaides@amwu.asn.au
or call the AMWU Helpdesk on:
1300 732 698.