



COALMINERS DIG DEEP FOR NEW MEMORIAL

A moving memorial to mine workers who have lost their lives on central Queensland's coal fields looks set to become reality thanks to a big fund-raising effort by AMWU members.

Queensland Coal Shop Stewards recently presented a \$90,000 cheque from our union to the progress committee of the coal town of Moura, where the memorial to the 50 workers who have died in the Moura-Kianga mines is due to be built over coming months.

About 700 members at our mine branches at Callide, BMA Blackwater, Lake Lindsay, Tarong, Curragh and Goonyella/Riverside made contributions, with the largest effort by the branch members in Moura itself.

"It makes me very proud that our mine members in the region had no hesitation in supporting this," said AMWU delegate Chris Harper.

"There have been too many fatalities in mining over it's history and to have in place in our own area, a memorial to those guys lost since 1961, is close to the hearts of our communities."

Members contributed \$81,000 – the most generous donation of the industry unions so far – while Queensland State Secretary Rohan Webb said the state branch had agreed to bring it up to \$90,000.

It is hoped the memorial's construction will begin in June.

The circular memorial has been designed in the form of a shell roof resembling a miner's helmet, with the entry intended



Proud tribute: (L:R) Chris Harper, Peter Lyon, John Walker, John Hempseed, Charlie Seeney and Peter Hammond with the symbolic AMWU cheque on the site in Moura where the memorial will be built.

so visitors feel they are walking down a mine tunnel. Photos and information on the men lost with sculptures and poetry will be featured inside.

Ideally, Moura Community Progress would like to have the memorial opening in Spring to mark the 40th anniversary of the Kianga disaster of September 1975, when 13 mineworkers died.

Moura Convener Peter Hammond said: "We've had disasters in Moura which nearly took away the town's spirit but the community all hung together and got through it.

"Many of us have lost someone in those accidents and we're pleased the community will now have a tribute to those men." ■



DEFENCE BANS BITE ON ALL FRONTS

Defence sites across the country are facing increasing disruption as our members' bans in protest at the Federal Government's inadequate resourcing and pay offer begin to bite.

The 10 bans and stoppages coincide with action by other unions across the Australian Public Service but are set to have an obvious impact due to many of our members hands-on work in testing and maintaining a wide variety of military equipment, including ordnance, weaponry, trucks.

In Victoria, South Australia, NSW and the ACT, defence sites have taken action over the Federal Government pay offer of 3.16 per cent over 3 years - after trade-offs - with members elsewhere being consulted on pending action.

"It's been noticeable that since Easter our members have hardened their attitude due to their annoyance at our union deliberately being stalled over the pay situation," said AMWU Victorian organiser Charlie Pandolfo.

"They are taking the initiative in telling us which of the 10 actions they wish to implement and which will be most effective at their particular site."

Three national base bans cover any Australian travel beyond the workplace and activity beyond normal hours, including any emergency call-backs or maintenance duties.

The only exception is for safety.



Action stations: some of the members at the munitions testing site at Port Wakefield who are acting to protect the integrity of their jobs.

The ordnance testing ground at Graytown and weapons testing facility at Benalla are among sites which have banned escorting visitors, all commercial work, processing admin paperwork.

Members in munitions testing at Port Wakefield in South Australia have taken all 10 actions, including overtime bans and stoppages of both 30 minutes and a full day.

"People here feel insulted, our members are being told not only must they go backward in real terms but they want us to work longer to do so," said delegate Peter Leggatt.

In-service support technicians at Penrith also went on a 24-hour strike, with

other action at Melbourne's Victoria Barracks complex, Bendigo's map-making facility, Canberra's Campbell Park, plus two facilities of the Defence, Science and Technology Organisation.

AMWU Assistant National secretary Mike Nicolaides said the Abbott Government was ultimately to blame.

"It has imposed impossible restrictions on bargaining with individual departments," he said.

"The result is an insulting pay offer, which takes more than it gives. This comes on top of their obvious disregard for technical and trade employees."

BRINGING LEAVE INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

The union's Victorian branch is campaigning hard for workers in transient industries the opportunity to take their leave entitlements with them between jobs.

"More and more workers are employed on short term contracts, labour hire or have to move employers regularly - and these workers deserve the right to accrue the benefits of entitlements like annual leave," said AMWU Assistant State Secretary Craig Kelly.

The Victorian branch has welcomed a parliamentary inquiry instigated by the Andrews Government into how portable long service leave - accumulated across employers - can be extended and improved. Craig Kelly said it had real potential to spread more widely our union's past successes in winning portability of long service leave for some members in

the labour hire industry, particularly maintenance installers on third party sites.

"The AMWU has been among unions in the forefront of introducing portable long serve leave in labour hire, where the nature of the industry means most workers will move between projects and employers over the years," he said.

"But the nature of work has radically changed across the whole economy, and working for the same employer for the 10 years needed to qualify for long service leave is no longer common.

"Long service leave should be based on years in the workforce, rewarding loyalty to the country by paying taxes and not discriminating against people because changing their employer is a chosen or an imposed part of their working life."

The right to portable long service leave is generally not covered in agreements, but State Governments have the power to legislate.

The Victorian Parliament will consider the economic and social impacts of extending portability beyond the construction and maintenance industries, with their report due by May 2016.

Four million Australians work as casuals, fixed term labour or for labour hire firms, which ACTU policy says often "act as little more than conduits by which casual workers are deployed to a host employer as a means of reducing cost."

The latest official statistics show that only a quarter of the workforce have remained with their present employer for more than 10 years.