



Paul Bastian, AMWU National Secretary

\$400 MILLION WIN FOR QLD RAIL

The AMWU's community efforts have scored a \$400 million victory in securing regional Queensland rail jobs as the union's national train campaign gathers momentum.

A fortnight of workplace rallies and community meetings by 200 members concerned over the future of Downer EDI's workshop in Maryborough convinced the Queensland State Government to act on a new maintenance contract for the next seven years.

Premier Anastasia Palaszczuk directed Queensland Rail to negotiate the \$400 million maintenance contract with Downer's Maryborough rail centre and UGL in Townsville.

Downer EDI is expected to receive up to \$300 million of the package of rolling stock maintenance and overhaul works.

The breakthrough was revealed the day after more than 200 local workers and their families attended a "Save Our Jobs, Save Maryborough" meeting at the regional city's Town hall, capping over a week of intense AMWU campaigning on securing and growing jobs for the area.

Local Downer EDI delegates joined AMWU Queensland State Secretary Rohan Webb in heading the effort, which had included a workplace rally at the maintenance depot.

The AMWU learned of the success hours before the Premier was due to visit Maryborough.

"This announcement proves that when regional communities come together and use their voices, we can



Fighting for jobs - and winning: Qld-NT State Secretary Rohan Webb talks to members rallying at Downer EDI in Maryborough.

achieve great things," Mr Webb said. "Although this announcement is a great step, we will continue to lobby hard to make sure the work and jobs for Maryborough are secured through the process ahead.

"This announcement doesn't mark the end of the community campaign, in fact it's only the beginning. We will continue to mobilise the local community and build support."

Projects for Maryborough and Townsville will include the overhaul and modification of Queensland Rail's L-series carriages, the diesel Tilt Trains, train units, locomotives and wheel sets.

Mr Webb said it was also good news for the Townsville community, rocked by the Queensland Nickel closure.

AMWU National Secretary Paul Bastian said it was heartening that the Queensland Government was seizing the potential for rail to invigorate local communities, in

line with over \$11 billion into rail manufacturing and infrastructure by Victoria's Andrews Government.

That includes \$980 million over four years on new trains, including five extra X'Trapolis trains being built by AMWU members in Ballarat and 28 high capacity trains.

NSW rail delegates are set to rally in Sydney today outside Transport NSW to drive home the need for the federal Government to make transport infrastructure grants to the states dependent upon local procurement being prioritised.

The NSW Baird Government is finalising a \$2.8 billion contract for 65 new intercity trains, but it is likely to import these "off the shelf" from Korea when they could be made in NSW.

"The AMWU will intensify its efforts to get the next Federal Government and all states to catch up and seize that initiative, as Queensland and Victoria clearly have." ■

CHARGE OVER DELEGATE'S DEATH

Industrial giant Bradken is expected to face court next week concerning a breach of safety standards over the death of an AMWU delegate at it's Wodonga foundry nearly two years ago.

The company has been charged under Victoria's Occupational Health and Safety Act, arising from an incident which killed experienced night shift worker Peter Watson on July 22, 2014.

Mr Watson, 42, was operating a skid steer loader to pick up a 276kg load of recently-cast hot metal castings when the load slipped, engulfing him and crushing him.

The father of two boys died at the scene after paramedics had arrived.

The incident was the first workplace death in Wodonga in eight years and deeply distressed many of Mr Watson's workmates, particularly those who were on shift that night and tried to help him.

At the town's Workers Memorial Day ceremony a few weeks ago Mr Watson was again remembered. Last year his two sons unveiled a plaque donated by the AMWU and local Trades Hall in the memorial rock at Sumison Gardens.

Bradken Resources Pty Ltd has been charged by WorkSafe Victoria for an



alleged failure to provide and maintain a safe plant.

An initial filing hearing has been scheduled for Monday at the Wodonga Magistrates Court.

The charge carries a maximum fine of \$350,000 if heard in a Magistrates Court or \$1.3 million if heard in the County Court.

AMWU organiser Dave Corben said: "Our members want to make sure that his two young sons are okay, that they

are looked after financially."

Mr Corben said there had been some disquiet and frustration among members over the past two years at the amount of time the WorkSafe investigation had taken and that almost no information had been released to the public.

There has been no coronial inquest into the death.

A member at the foundry said the matter had been "shrouded in secrecy" and this had not been helped by Bradken no longer having a human resources manager in Wodonga.

Mr Corben said Mr Watson's family, friends and the wider community deserved to know the full circumstances of what had occurred and were hoping this would emerge before the court.

"It's still unsettled at the site because a lot of people want a full explanation about what happened, about where the responsibility lay, so they can move on. There is considerable frustration it has taken so long."

AMWU Victorian Secretary Steve Dargavel said the union had over many years urged WorkSafe to take strong action in investigating and prosecuting cases where there had been a workplace fatality. ■

DEFENCE POLL PLOY SHOT DOWN

Defence Department members have fired a shot across the bows of the Turnbull Government by voting to reject an inferior collective agreement which their bosses tried to unload days before the election was called.

It was the second time in three months that Defence's civilian employees had refused a deal which includes an effective pay rise of just 1.2 per cent each year, with no backpay.

The move by Defence to rush the agreement through before the federal election saw the margin of the "no" vote in May strongly increase on the first poll in March.

"The Coalition wanted this out of the way, but now it is a live election issue in some of the marginal

electorates with a sizeable defence community," said AMWU Assistant National Secretary Mike Nicolaides.

"The Coalition always trumpets national defence and security, yet their cutbacks make a mockery of that.

"Defence are stuck in the bargaining straight-jacket imposed by the Turnbull Government on all Commonwealth agencies. After March's 'no' vote, only two days of negotiations were held then they put up virtually the same proposal our members had already rejected."

Defence Department technicians, along with all departmental staff, have had no pay rise since 2014 and have been negotiating this agreement for 18 months.

The agreement would also permanently hand management or the Defence Minister greater licence

to vary key areas of employment, including job classifications and performance pay criteria.

AMWU members opposed to the deal rallied last month outside the Orchard Hills missile maintenance establishment in the NSW marginal seat of Lindsay, held by Coalition MP Fiona Scott.

That co-incided with a wave of strikes across Federal Government departments against the Turnbull Government's cutbacks to enterprise agreements.

"The Coalition want a defence workforce that is cheap and compliant, but our members won't have a bar of it. Their skills and commitment deserve better," Mr Nicolaides said. ■