



Paul Bastian, AMWU National Secretary

CONTRACTOR'S EXIT LEAVES CUB FLAT

Sacked AMWU brewery members had a huge victory this week when the labour hire firm providing non-union workers which took their jobs withdrew from the CUB Abbotsford plant due to its inability to work with the management.

Programmed Maintenance threw in the towel after 11 weeks of failure after its fill-in fitters failed to raise beer production above a third of normal, leaving it facing millions of dollars in losses and legal action from the upset management of CUB.

That leaves CUB, which hired Programmed to reduce maintenance wages by up to 65 per cent, struggling to find a new contractor or with the only sensible choice - re-employ the sacked 55 maintenance experts on their previous pay and conditions.

AMWU Victorian State Secretary Steve Dargavel said CUB was now isolated after being publicly exposed as the puppetmaster behind the whole strategy.

"Programmed tendered for and won the CUB contract on the lowest labour costs but hasn't been able to perform and they leave CUB in

disarray," Mr Dargavel said.

"We expect CUB to sue Programmed. Labour hire contractors should take note, they face losing millions of dollars if they put themselves in a position of undercutting the wages and conditions of workers."

Mr Dargavel said the AMWU and ETU had won an important battle, but the dispute with CUB goes on and it's essential that we keep donations flowing to sustain the effort for our sacked members.

The pain for CUB is only set to worsen, with beer output still dropping and Victorian unions set to march on the Victorian State Parliament next Thursday in a massive protest against the multinational brewer.

Programmed's withdrawal came a day after the industrial agreement it used at CUB and tried to impose on the 55 AMWU and ETU members was exposed as a sham by ABC radio's Background Briefing.

The Western Australian agreement from a few years ago was signed by only three casuals, one who said he did not understand what it was and only worked for the contractor for six days.

ETU officials said they had met with cross-benchers in Canberra this week, who would support a parliamentary inquiry into corporate "gaming" of the Fair Work Act.

ACTU Secretary Dave Oliver, at the weekly rally outside CUB, said the 55 had the movement's total support and hit out at the Government masquerading as "the worker's friend" while introducing a raft of anti-union legislation.

AMWU member Chris Brown said morale is high. The sacked workers deepened the embarrassment for CUB today by protesting outside its corporate headquarters in Melbourne's Southbank area.

"It's hard to see CUB being able to get any other labour hire company to fight this battle for them, no contractor in their right mind would touch them," Mr Brown said.

"CUB are out of options, but we know it's not the end of this dispute, just one win." ■

TURNBULL LETS SUBS' CONTRACT DRIFT

The AMWU has pushed the boat out on the Future Submarine build by meeting French contractor DCNS while the Turnbull Government lets local content and jobs on the \$50 billion mega-project silently drift from its post-election agenda.

AMWU National Assistant Secretary Glenn Thompson had a positive discussion last week with the Chief Executive of DCNS Australia, Sean Costello, when they met at our Sydney offices.

But there has been zero response so far from Defence Industry Minister Christopher Pyne on our request for detailed talks on local industry's role being specified in the initial submarine contract, despite Mr Thompson being in Canberra this week to meet MPs.

Mr Thompson and Mr Costello went over DCNS plans on building the 12 submarines in Australia after the French defence firm won approval of the Federal Government in April to complete

the project in Adelaide.

"It was a positive engagement, with DCNS outlining the process after the first stage of the future sub contract with Defence Department, which is expected later this year," Mr Thompson said.

"We're deeply concerned about local jobs and how the French supply chain and the Australian supply chain will interact, that's fundamental to the entire project.

"Mr Costello assured us it was intended

....continued next page

TURNBULL LETS SUBS' CONTRACT DRIFT

.... from page 1.

to have some of the French supply chain re-locate to Australia and interact with local industry but the real detail on that is likely to be settled within the first-stage terms of the initial contract with the Defence Department."

Our union wrote to PM Malcolm Turnbull stressing that it is imperative these contracts have explicit clauses binding on the French to maximise Australian industry involvement and the integration of French companies within the local supply chain.

Mr Thompson called on the Federal Government to urgently instigate a Defence Round-table of industry, unions and state governments to co-ordinate the process and ensure transparency during the initial contract negotiations. That round-table needs to focus on the contract with DCNS specifying the use, identification and certification of suppliers, especially in the first submarines built.



Good to know you: AMWU Assistant National secretary Glenn Thompson (left) with Mr Costello.

It must also set out clear benchmarks and an obligation on DCNS to help Australian defence suppliers meet these requirements, whether they be technical or about accessing finance.

In Canberra, Mr Thompson met senior Labor industry spokesmen, the Greens and independents including SA Senator Nick Xenophon.

Senator Xenophon put the key issues over Australian content and monitoring of the contract process in questions to Defence Minister Marise Payne - particularly a 70 per cent minimum local industry content. The minister would give no commitment except to "maximise" local involvement.

Mr Thomson said: "Mr Turnbull handballed the involvement of Australian defence suppliers and what we expect from DCNS to Christopher Pyne, but the AMWU hasn't heard a squeak from the Defence Industry Minister since before the election.

"He was all over us when his own job was on the line, but now we're getting down to nuts and bolts negotiations on the future of Australian defence industry jobs he's letting it drift like an old hulk." ■

AMWU FEEDS KIDS' DRIVE TO LEARN

Meritor are a global supplier of heavy vehicle drivetrains but our AMWU members there are giving local school kids the drive to learn by fuelling them up in the morning.

Every Wednesday two of our members arrive down at the Sunshine North Primary School in Melbourne ready to serve bread, milk, toast and cereal to make sure children who might not get a breakfast at home have a full feed before the day's classes.

AMWU delegate at Meritor Jerry Brown said the workers happily volunteered to take turns for the "Best Start" breakfast club run, which they finance through every dollar they feed into the coffee machine in the canteen during their daily breaks.

When the school did a survey some years ago, it found that up to 140 of its 300 pupils were arriving at school without any breakfast.

"There's children from a lot of different cultural backgrounds, it's a low socio-economic area and sometimes there's no breakfast in the mornings. Parents may have to rush off to work very early, the kids get up and come straight to school," Mr Brown said.

"The kids get to know you after a while,



Busy morning: AMWU delegate Jerry brown (in union shirt) serves the children brekky at 8 a.m. with fellow Meritor employees Ms Tejaswini Mugathi and "TJ" Tejinder, another AMWU member. Supervising the eating is Sunshine North Primary Principal Ken Ryan (r).

we have our names on our jumpers and we form a good relationship – they're good kids."

Mr Brown said it was deeply fulfilling for the workers to be able to participate in ensuring the coffee funds they donated had a truly beneficial local community impact.

The workplace school relationship has extended from the breakfast club to also helping fund sports uniforms for disadvantaged children.

The children also visit Meritor, giving musical and dance performances, giving talks and doing a Christmas concert.

School Principal Ken Ryan said he saw a two-way benefit in Meritor workers, the teachers and kids sharing brekky club.

"It's a healthy thing, the Meritor guys give more than money, they volunteer their time for these kids and maybe come away feeling pretty good, which might mean they have a more productive day at work." ■