

**Paul Bastian**, AMWU National Secretary

# VIC TRAIN BUILD LEAVES NSW COALITION IN DISGRACE

**T**he AMWU's campaign to boost local railway procurement is on schedule in Victoria with local assembly of the state's largest ever order of metro trains, putting 1100 new jobs on track.

The \$2 billion fleet of High Capacity Metro Trains will be built with at least 60 per cent local content.

Downer EDI was part of the winning Evolution consortium with CRRC, the world's largest train manufacturer, who will set up a headquarters in Melbourne.

"This not only provides security and certainty to hundreds of workers and their industry, it also commits to long-term jobs and training opportunities for a new generation of highly-skilled workers," said AMWU Victorian Secretary Steve Dargavel.

"It vindicates the vision and hard campaigning of our members to ensure we have a Labor Government that leads the nation in prioritising manufacturing jobs."

Mr Dargavel said 15 per cent of the new workforce to deliver the 65 new trains for the Cranbourne-Pakenham line must be apprentices or trainees, delivering on the AMWU's priority.

Victoria's rail expansion was in blinding contrast to the recent decision by NSW Coalition Government to have its fleet of 65 new intercity trains built in South Korea.

About 80 AMWU members at Downer's Melbourne overhaul depot at Newport were overjoyed when Premier Daniel Andrews announced a \$16 million upgrade to their site. There will also be 100 jobs at a new maintenance and stabling facility



High Capacity boost: Pleased workers at Downer's Newport facility stand behind AMWU Victorian State Secretary Steve Dargavel, Premier Daniel Andrews and Vic Transport Minister Jacinta Allan.

at Pakenham East and a servicing facility at Calder Park.

"Everybody here is totally rapt, there will be hundreds more people, and the chance for a bigger apprentice intake," said AMWU delegate Ray Portelli.

"We have 30 years' of work ahead of us, it's great. Downer will create opportunities for skilled people across Victoria."

The Andrews Government has also allocated nine extra trains to Alstom, taking its orders to 144 carriages worth \$245 million – guaranteed work until 2019.

Mr Dargavel said concerns that CRRC may not stick to local procurement obligations should be allayed by the strict checking done



Disgraced Premier: The NSW Baird Government is suffering a huge community backlash.

on all componentry by Victoria's independent Industry Capability Network. This will create opportunities for local firms to tender, so content should exceed 60 per cent. ■

## BOSS SEES THE LIGHT ON CASUALISATION

**W**orkers at Thorn Lighting in Sydney are celebrating after forcing their employer to accept a deal on better wages, which also gives improved job security.

The AMWU members took protected industrial action after months of negotiations saw management refuse to come to the table on their key issues.

The heart of the dispute was around casualisation.

Like many workplaces, the Thorn Lighting employees have seen a massive increase in the number of labour hire casuals on-site.

The workers decided they had to make a stand, insisting that their EBA specify that labour hire casuals be paid site rates plus a casual loading rather than the base award rate the company was pushing for.

“There are more benefits like annual leave and sick leave being a permanent employee,” said AMWU member Sonia Pomida. “The company wanted to bring in casuals to do our jobs. That’s why we went on strike.”



Solid win: striking members of the AMWU and other unions outside Thorn Lighting at Wetherill Park, during a visit from NSW State Secretary Tim Ayres.

When management refused to budge, the workers voted for industrial action.

What was originally intended as a single-day strike was extended when management refused to give ground.

Delivery trucks and couriers refused to cross into the plant, which helped to encourage management to come to the table.

After five days on strike, the workers won all of their demands including an eight per cent pay rise over three years, no grandfathering of conditions and, crucially, labour hire being paid at site rates.

The workers, who assemble high-tech lighting for factories and commercial premises, credit their victory to the strength of their union membership. ■

## OVERTIME WIN: TOIL OR MONEY IS YOUR CHOICE

**T**he AMWU has gained big changes to how overtime is taken – paid out or time off – which should ensure members now have a real choice.

The Fair Work Commission recently finalised a new model description for Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) as part of its Modern Awards review which will apply to members in food and beverage, print, black coal mining and other manufacturing industries.

The change is designed to combat the habit of bosses in many workplaces to pressure a worker to take any overtime as time off instead of pay at overtime rates.

It requires that any TOIL in each particular pay period must be set



out in a written agreement between the worker and employer, where both must agree that time off may be taken instead of being paid for the overtime. But if the worker requests at any time that the extra hours worked be paid out at the overtime rate, that will happen and the amount owed must be paid in the next pay period.

AMWU National Secretary Paul Bastian said: “This new model award variation is welcome – it should hand proper power back to workers to

choose whether to take overtime as TOIL or be paid out.”

In 2015 the union presented evidence from WA print apprentice Zach Carelton, proving some employers refuse to offer payment for overtime.

Mr Carelton told the Commission in 2015 he had said “no” to working overtime because it would only be given back as time owing on a one-for-one basis, which he didn’t think was a fair exchange compared to the proper overtime rate.

“The result has definitely made it worthwhile to make a statement, the change may not have happened if I hadn’t put my case,” he told *AMWU News*.

The new Model Term also offers protection, stating: “An employer must not exert undue influence or undue pressure on an employee in relation to a decision by the employee to make, or not make, an agreement to take time off instead of payment for overtime.” ■

**For full details on all the changes, call our AMWU Helpdesk on 1300 732 698 or visit: [www.amwu.org.au/changes\\_to\\_time\\_off\\_instead\\_of\\_overtime](http://www.amwu.org.au/changes_to_time_off_instead_of_overtime)**