



Queensland Branch News



15th April 2014

MAY DAY 2014

Stand for Queensland

Once again May Day 2014 will be celebrated on Sunday 4th May, after “Undo Campbell” changed our traditional public holiday date. Marches will be held in regional areas – Gladstone, Mackay, Townsville, Cairns and Thursday Island – check the MUA website.

The May Day march route and celebrations will be similar to last year. The march will commence at 10am sharp from Corner of Wharf and Turbot Streets in the city. The City of Brisbane Pipe Band will accompany our marchers.

At the last Branch Committee meeting, members have indicated they would like to see some changes enacted by the Branch and a small Committee has been established. If any members would like to participate in the Committee, please contact the Branch office.

Volunteers are required for:

- 12noon Saturday for 2 hours – assemble float & banners
- 7am Sunday for set up at the RNA showgrounds.
- A crew to stay back for clean up. Also disassemble float and BBQ

The Working Class Unite!

The MUA requests all Brisbane based members who are not working to attend the march and bring their families to enjoy the after march festivities with us.

Food, drinks, entertainment and amusement rides will be available for your enjoyment after the march at the RNA Showgrounds until 4.30pm.

WORKERS COMPENSATION AND INJURIES AT WORK

Members who are uncertain of their rights and obligations as a result of sustaining a workplace injury should not hesitate to contact the Branch for advice and representation. Make contact from the beginning and regularly update with your progress whether you are at home or on light duties. It is in member's best interest to attend the MUA office, completing an authority for us to act on behalf of members.

Members are reminded that as a result of sustaining a workplace injury, they have an obligation to partake in rehabilitation in order to return to work to pre-injury duties; this does not however circumvent the injured worker utilising their own preferred medical practitioner.

Some employers have been instructing our members that they MUST attend the Company appointed medical practitioner. This may be for Return-to-Work purposes but members maintain the right to the Doctor of their choice in the first instance and they become their medical practitioner. If you are away and repatriated at home, whether you agree with the company doctor or not, once home your local family doctor then becomes your treating doctor.

For serious injuries the company or insurance company will appoint a case manager who co-ordinates your return to work program including appointments and expenses etc. It is important to follow your program and make it to appointments. DO NOT LEAVE YOUR SELF OPEN. Companies have been quick to discredit our members for whatever reason and then cut compensation pay forcing them to a lawyer and basically starving them into accepting lesser compensation than is entitled. Play it smart and you will receive everything you are entitled to.

WorkCover Queensland has indicated their willingness to continue to consult with the Union regarding issues as they arise. Workers compensation can be a complex matter often requiring legal intervention. The preferred Union lawyers are Maurice and Blackburn.

SAFETY IS UNION BUSINESS

If there are safety issues in your workplace not being addressed by the boss, the only thing holding you back is - not being organised. The Queensland Work Health and Safety Act has all of the mechanisms required to achieve the results that workers need to survive on the job.

If you are a seafarer covered by AMSA - Seacare covers your vessel the same way.
YOU ARE ENTITLED TO TRAINED HSR's under legislation.

If your workplace does not have Designated Work Groups (DWGs) and elected Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) contact the Union to find out how to establish this important structure. The DWG/HSR structure provides a vital range of powers to workers which complements your Union delegate structure, giving more tools to fix safety. The HSR takes part in the OH&S Committee at work but can also stand alone and conduct worksite inspections. They also have the authority to call Inspectors, through Provisional Improvement Notices (PIN) if the company will not seriously deal with your safety issues. A PIN cannot be ignored by an employer if done correctly. They can only be issued by an HSR who has the required 5 days of paid training. If any of your workmates are in immediate danger, the HSR has the ability and responsibility to stop the job. You simply say the workforce will do any other task but not that task until it is safe.

An HSR has extensive protections against adverse action and discrimination because of their role. If you are a delegate or worker who does speak up about safety, the best thing which can be done to protect yourself is to ensure that HSRs are elected to speak for you, or ensure that you are the HSR. A smart HSR that understands the legislation and has the backing of the MUA, is a force to be reckoned with.
DELEGATES CAN ALSO BE HSRs!

Companies have had their chance at health and safety in the workplace and have failed us too many times with their stalling tactics and undermining of OH&S committees. The Union policy is to take ownership of our own safety and protection of our members at work.

STEP BY STEP TO A SAFER WORKPLACE:

1. Seek advice and support from the Union
2. Workers formally request from the employer in writing the desire of workers to commence negotiations for the formation of DWGs (can be done via your Union Official)
3. Workers/Union and employer negotiate DWGs and numbers of HSRs and Deputy HSRs per DWG (Ensure this is documented)
4. Employer must ensure all workers are advised of the agreed DWGs and to which DWG they belong
5. Workers elect a Returning Officer to run election of the HSRs
6. Returning Officer informs employer of the HSRs; employer must display in a prominent position in the workplace: who is in each DWG and the applicable HSRs. The employer must also inform Queensland Work Safe of the elected HSRs
7. Employers must then arrange the 5 day fully paid HSR course as soon as possible for elected HSRs and Deputies (by Law within 3 months) and they must use the HSRs preferred trainer. Seek advice from the Branch who is preferred trainer in your area.
8. Be sensible and respectful in your new position to maintain support of the workers you represent and.....seek advice and support from the Union at any step!

HSR REFERENCE:

State OH&S download the Worker representation and participation guide at:

www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au – About workplace Australia – Publications and resources.

Seafarers can download the Health and safety representatives Handbook at:

www.seacare.gov.au Forms and publications – published information – search health and safety.

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