

No. 35 – Wednesday March 23, 2016

Vale Pat Geraghty – Brussels Attacks – Queensland Nickel – DP World Solidarity

Vale Pat Geraghty

FORMER FEDERAL Secretary of the Seamen's Union of Australia, Pat Geraghty passed away in the early of hours of Wednesday 23 March/3/16.

Pat dedicated his life to the Seamen's Union and to the working class movement. His tireless efforts to make sure that Australian Seafarers could retire with more than their last fortnight's pay came into fruition in 1973 with the formation of the Seafarers Retirement fund which eventually merged with the Wharfies Retirement Fund and became Maritime Super.

Pat was a man who always found time for younger members and spent time out of an incredibly busy life to always assist and give words of advice.

Pat's foundation work as a leader of Maritime Unions against apartheid played a significant role in the world wide struggle against the South African Apartheid regime.



The great Nelson Mandela paid particular tribute to Pat and the Seamen's Union when he visited Australia after release from Prison.

Pat Geraghty lived a long and full life, always fighting for those in society with less and to make our lives better.

The Queensland Branch of the MUA sends our deepest

respects to the Geraghty family in this time of intense sadness for them.

Brussels Attacks

THE BRANCH sends its deepest sympathies to those people killed and injured in the horrific outrages perpetrated in Belgium on Wednesday 23 March 2016.

Working people everywhere should have the right to go about their business in safety and not have their lives displaced and ruined by anyone or any organisation wishing to impose their warped ideology by force on others. It is totally and utterly WRONG.

Branch Officials Whereabouts This Week

THIS WEEK Branch Secretary Bob Carnegie has been in Darwin with Assistant National Secretary Warren Smith and WA Deputy Branch Secretary Adrian Evans as part of the National Qube Negotiating Committee.

At the time of writing some useful progress is being made concerning Part A which is the part of the document concerning National Issues.

On Tuesday 22 March 2016 we met with Darwin Wharfies discussing matters of local significance. The Darwin waterfront has suffered a savage decline in volume which has led to discussions concerning redundancies.

It appears after exhaustive discussions with Qube management we have reached agreement on numbers and how redundancies are to be rolled out.

The loss of any job is heartbreaking and we have done our best to save as many jobs as possible.

Bob will be back in Brisbane on Thursday 24 March 2016.

Deputy Branch Secretary Jason Miners and North Queensland Branch Organiser Glenn Desmond flew to Weipa on Tuesday to begin organising on the South Embley project and to meet with members involved in a

very brief (4 week) dredging project there.

Central Queensland Organiser Paul Petersen is in Gladstone on Wednesday and Thursday this week to attend to various issues that are in need of attention.

Member Says Thank You

DEAR MUA MEMBERS

I have been a proud and always financial member of the MUA for the past 17 years. I recently had an accident and was hospitalised for a few weeks.

The members had organized a whip around at the DP World yard meeting and my brother Paul Petersen bought it up to the hospital.

I can't explain how proud I am to be a part of our great union and wish to thank all those who contributed and sent their best wishes.

It is great to see the Qld branch of the MUA once again on track with Bob Carnegie and his new team taking the fair dinkum stance with the back to basics touch one touch all approach.

I hope I can return the favour and be of some help in one way or another in the future.

In Solidarity

Marty Petersen

Special Report: Queensland Nickel

RIGHT FROM THE get-go, the events unfolding at Queensland Nickel have both shocked and surprised everyone involved from the unions through to administrators. Clive Palmer has dragged the business from one crisis point to another with no regard for the security and well-being of his employees.

As many will be aware, we witnessed the sacking of 237 employees on a Friday morning in January, and the business (Queensland Nickel Industries) was placed under administration early the following Monday. This has had the effect of leaving those employees without access to accrued entitlements until the administration process is complete. FTI Consulting (the administrators) assumed control of the business.

Through the course of the administration process it was revealed that the overall operation consisted of three companies; Queensland Nickel Industries, Queensland Nickel Resources, and Queensland Nickel Metals. QN Resources and QN Metals had ownership of the plant and assets, and QN Industries was the shell company that paid wages and contractors. QN Industries had also been utilised as a guarantor for other Palmer business loans.

On March 7th it was announced that QN Resources and QN Metals had appointed another company owned by Palmer to assume operations of the business – Queensland Nickel Sales. This was a move designed to take back control of the business from FTI Consulting. There was talk during the course of the week that employees would be offered employment with QN Sales but this did not eventuate despite efforts of the State Government to authorise all the relevant operating licences.

Friday 11th March brought about another black day in this ongoing saga. Administrators, FTI, were left with little choice but to sack the remaining 500 employees.

FTI have an obligation to act in the best interest of creditors and were essentially left with control of a company under administration with very little in the way of assets, and no ongoing revenue stream. We also learned that all nickel ore shipments were cancelled.

In a meeting with administrators on Wednesday, 16th March Union Representatives learned that FTI had made all efforts to allow a smooth transition of business by signing over relevant licences and attempting to mediate on matters such as ore shipments in an effort to maintain the employment of workers. Queensland Nickel Sales refused to co-operate.

It is now being reported that the plant may not reopen until mid-year as there is no ore to process. Workers fear that the plant may not be able to ramp up again if it is left under-utilised for such a long period.

To date, there are now a total of more than 700 local Townsville employees that are still awaiting news of what will happen with accrued entitlements such as annual and sick leave, redundancy, as well as separation payments which were not paid. As the business is under administration they have to wait to see if the company goes into liquidation. If this is the case and the company is unable to pay these entitlements, employees are able to access the Fair Entitlements Guarantee (FEG). There is also an allowance for the Minister for Employment to use their discretion to allow earlier access to FEG.

FTI Consulting informed us that they had written to the Minister to request this early access for QN employees. At the time of writing we are awaiting further notification/movement on employee access to these entitlements.

Throughout the entire process so far, what we have seen is a consistent theme of dishonesty and underhanded actions and words from the Palmer camp. Workers have

been faced with a barrage of lies coated in the thinnest veneer of an element of truth.

An example of this took place just prior to the first round of sackings. Clive Palmer denied he had approached the Queensland State Government to seek a guarantor for a loan. The truth was, Clive had not physically been in the room, but he had sent representatives to make that request.

This distortion of truth was evident in media interviews with Clive Palmer where he volunteered assets from Waratah Coal and China First to underwrite QN operations. Clive had made the offer, but it was highly unlikely and debatable as to whether the assets were worth as much as he professed.

Employees now await their next creditors' meeting with FTI to decide whether the business goes into liquidation or continues to trade. This meeting is set to take place on the 22nd of April.

If what has happened at Queensland Nickel has taught us anything, it has taught us that what happens between now and the creditors' meeting is anyone's guess. We will continue to provide support to our members as events unfold.

But make no mistake; it is Clive Palmer who has inflicted this misery on more than 700 workers in a manner that has been cruel and entirely calculated throughout the prolonged and ongoing process.

DP World Gateway London Solidarity

DEAR FELLOW WORKERS

Please take time to read this and support dock workers fighting for union recognition against one of the Global Network Giants.... DP World.

Dear Colleagues

Support Dockers at DP World London Gateway

A new terminal operated by global network terminal (GNT) operator DP World has been constructed at the port of London Gateway - workers there need your help to secure a decent CBA (Collective Bargaining Agreement). Since opening in 2013 Unite the Union has been campaigning for a collective bargaining agreement for workers there so that they can negotiate with management on important workplace issues like occupational health and safety, breaks and pay. DP World management has made it clear they don't want this to happen and things have reached a critical point in the

campaign. DP World may try to force an unnecessary ballot to try to avoid having to make an agreement.

Dockers need your support at a challenging time that could be a turning point in the campaign. Please do these three things now:

- Show London Gateway workers they're not alone by sending a message of support to Steve Biggs at: uniteatlondongateway@gmail.com
- Sign up for campaign updates.
- Share this page from ITF website: http://www.itfglobal.org/en/campaigns-solidarity/campaigns/support-dockers-at-dp-world-london-gateway/#tab_campaign1 on social media to spread the word with your own friends and comrades

I will keep you updated on further developments.

In unity

Nigel Venes

Assistant Dockers' Secretary

May Day 2016



LOCK IN THE date May Day back in May! Monday 2 May join fellow workers on the corner of Turbot and Wharf Streets. Be there by 9.30am for 10.00am march then onto the showgrounds for a fun family day and festivities. Please use this link to QCU for all May Day information around Queensland.

<http://www.queenslandunions.org.au/events>

Delegate Training

THE FOLLOWING training courses have been scheduled this year for Queensland Branch members. Please contact the Branch to register.

- 13 – 14 April Delegates 1 – Brisbane
- 30 – 31 March Delegates 1 and 2 – Weipa - TBC
- 2 – 6 May Delegates 3 Leadership – St Georges Basin
- 24 – 26 May Delegates 1 and 2 – Gladstone
- 19 – 21 July Delegates 1 and 2 – Townsville
- 1 – 2 September Delegates 2 – Brisbane
- 14 – 18 November Delegates 3 Leadership – St Georges Basin

IDC and ITF Meet to Defend Dockers Rights

REPRESENTATIVES OF the International Dockworkers' Council (IDC) and International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) met in Barcelona, Spain, today to explore how to work together to defend dockers' jobs and rights.

The one-day meeting agreed the following statement of intent:

Representatives of the International Dockworkers' Council (IDC) and International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) meeting in Barcelona today 5th February 2016 have agreed to find ways of working more closely together with the aim of strengthening solidarity between dockworkers' globally and supporting each other in fighting back against attacks on their working terms and conditions, and job security.

These common challenges faced by our members are the result of significant changes in maritime transport, and some employers and governments pursuing a neo-liberal agenda characterised by union busting including through automation, the casualisation of jobs and deregulation of labour standards and protections. Collective agreements are increasingly being violated and we are concerned over health and safety conditions in ports, as well as attempts to limit dockworkers' ability to exercise their trade union rights.

We have established a joint committee to develop a strategy and plan actions urgently to tackle the key challenges and issues faced by dockworkers globally.

In particular, our organisations will cooperate on: Campaigning and solidarity support to secure and maintain dockworkers' rights internationally, especially in the global terminal operating companies (GNTs); and Managing the impact of automation, securing lashing work and respect for dockworkers' jurisdiction.

We anticipate an active and fruitful collaboration between our two organisations to build dockworkers' power around the world.

Paddy Crumlin, ITF president and chair of its dockers' section, commented: "This has been a landmark event. Both organisations are now best placed to promote and defend the rights of international dockworkers."

Jordi Aragunde, IDC general coordinator, added: "Today's meeting was designed to further our joint efforts to aid and represent dockers worldwide. It is a pleasure to see it result in such concrete outcomes." Torben Seebold, ITF vice chair and ETF (European Transport Workers' Federation) dockers' section vice chair, added: "Dockers do hard and often dangerous work which is rarely given the recognition it deserves. The ITF and IDC are committed to changing that."

IDC European zone coordinator Anthony Tetard concluded: "Dockers face common challenges, which demand a united response. Today we have agreed one."

Message of Solidarity and Support for Dockers in Grangemouth, Scotland

AT THE MEETING of the International Dockworkers Council in Antwerp on 9th March, Dockworkers from across Europe gathered to discuss the attacks on our brothers in the Port of Grangemouth in Scotland. Despite cowardly threats and intimidation, the Grangemouth Dockers have bravely stood up to their company, and that they have voted to strike back against forced changes to their working practices and attacks upon their pensions. We learn that this company is organising scab labor and lockouts of the dockworkers.



We urge Forth Ports to negotiate with the Grangemouth Dockers, to practice common sense and to stop unwarranted attacks upon employees. We are ready to offer our assistance to help find a resolution.

If they refuse, then should know the IDC was born out of struggles such as this and we severely condemn these attacks. The IDC pledges its support for this fight, we are ready to show our solidarity, We will never walk alone.

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