



# QUEENSLAND BRANCH NEWS

NEWSLETTER of the QLD Branch of the MARITIME UNION of AUSTRALIA

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To be truly radical is to make hope possible, rather than despair convincing - Raymond Williams No. 72 - Friday January 20, 2017

## "One of Australia's finest unionists" - CSL THEVENARD TO RETURN TO OZ - R.I.P Bill Jones (Arab) Barbary Bill - Book Review

### "One of Australia's finest unionists"

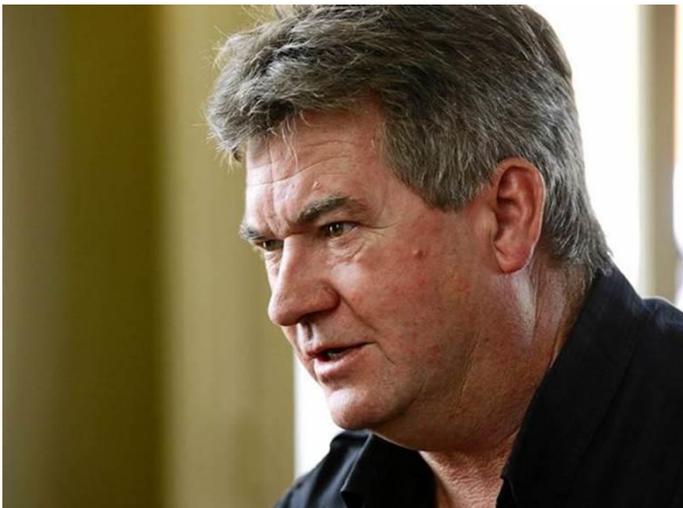
The following article is about one of Australia's finest Unionists, Peter Simpson. Peter and the ETU are great friends of this Branch. During the 1998 Patricks Lockout, Peter spent nearly every night camped out at either Camp Unity or Camp Solidarity helping our Union hold the line against tyranny.

In the infamous sacking by text message of half the Hutchison workforce in August 2015, so keen were Peter and the ETU to support, they nearly beat the MUA down to the Hutchison Terminal to start the community protest.

Peter is now in the greatest battle of all. We wish with all our hearts you will win this one against the odds as you have led so many working-class battles to victory against all odds.

Queensland Times Article:

Working class hero Simmo's toughest battle yet  
<http://www.qt.com.au/news/working-class-hero-simmos-toughest-battle-yet/3131248/>



WARRIOR: ETU state secretary Peter Simpson faces his toughest battle yet against stage four melanoma. David Nielsen

PETER Simpson has fought and won plenty of battles on behalf of ETU members and working families but now he faces his toughest battle yet.

The Electrical Trades Union state secretary is battling Stage 4 melanoma and as a result Peter Ong has stepped

into the role of acting ETU state secretary as the man known universally as 'Simmo' fights his own personal war.

Working people who value a fair day's pay for a fair day's work and decent conditions for themselves and their families have a lot to thank Mr Simpson for.

He is well known in Ipswich for standing up to the LNP on behalf of local workers after the job losses that were announced at the Swanbank power station before the last state election.

He was also a prime mover in the Not4Sale campaign which was opposed to asset sales and privatisation of the electricity industry.

The ETU sent a delegation to help Ipswich residents clean up after the 2011 the floods and, under Mr Simpson's leadership, have given a strong voice in the campaign against asset sales, particularly in Ipswich.

"The world, Queensland and places like Ipswich need people like Peter Simpson around to stand up and fight on behalf of people who can't fight for themselves," ETU state organiser and Mr Simpson's close mate Stuart Traill said.

"He's stood up to a number of governments (both LNP and ALP) on behalf of workers and he has won.

"He has countless achievements standing up for ETU members and the broader labour movement and we all have our fingers and toes crossed and we are standing with him as he fights this battle.

"It is something he needs to concentrate on, hence his decision to step aside."

Blair MP Shayne Neumann described Mr Simpson as "a great warrior for the working class".

Political and industrial warfare can be fought in an almost jungle environment. Mr Simpson has been a rhinoceros in that jungle - thick skinned, strong in the face of adversity and he comes straight at you when he attacks.

Just ask Ian Berry and Sean Choat, who lost their LNP seats in Ipswich and Ipswich West largely because of Mr Simpson's work in the Not4Sale campaign in Ipswich. But he never attacked by stealth. He came for them straight between the eyes.

Authorised by Bob Carnegie, Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) Queensland Branch Secretary

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"If Simmo played league in the front-row and played the same way he has fought his union battles he would have played for Australia," Mr Traill said.

"One of the things I have always respected about Simmo, and it is what he has taught all of us, is that if you go after someone in campaigns or on an issue...to go from the front.

"He never stabbed people in the back. It was always in the front. And you maintain respect that way.

"In the rough and tumble of politics and the industrial game you have to be able to maintain relationships and the only way you can is to stick to principles, maintain credibility and come from the front."

Mr Traill said Mr Simpson was the best union organiser and leader he had ever known.

But he added that he had always ensured there was a succession plan in place and that Mr Ong would continue his legacy with aplomb.

Winning against the odds has been a Simpson trademark.

"Simmo played a key role in helping this government win the 'unwinnable election'," Ipswich-based Mr Traill said.

"I'll never forget the Redcliffe by-election, which was the first test of the Newman Government and the Not4Sale campaign's efforts to stop privatisation, and Simmo as he always does went all in and challenged the premier and Tim Nicholls that the by-election would be an indication of the view of the people.

"He led that campaign and thousands of people in Queensland, and in particular Ipswich, followed him. When he stands up and talks he talks from the heart and his principles are beyond reproach."

Mr Simpson has taken on both the ALP and LNP over his career.

He and Mr Traill were expelled by the ALP from the party when they stood up to the Bligh government's asset sales ahead of the disastrous 2012 election.

Both were later reinstated, and proven right in their stance.

Simpson was under immense pressure in that time as the state secretary of an ALP-affiliated union, but he did not flinch.

His supporters and opponents will wish him all the best as he fights his toughest battle yet.

Only a fool would back against him winning again.

### **CSL THEVENARD TO RETURN TO OZ**

The CSL Thevenard has been in Taiwan with a cement cargo. The crew and indeed all of us held grave fears for her future. There was a distinct feeling this vessel was headed to a Taiwanese scrapyards with the only memory of the CSL Thevenard might have been when one purchased a razor blade.



The Queensland Branch expresses its thanks to ITF Coordinator Dean Summers for facilitating QLD ITF Inspector Sarah Maguire in visiting the vessel in Taiwan. It was hugely appreciated.

In a series of massive blows delivered against our merchant fleet this is one vessel that did not sail over the horizon never to return.

### **R.I.P Bill Jones (Arab) Barbary Bill**

Bill Jones was a fine unionist and one of nature's gentleman. This tribute is from a former shipment Bob Toraus union book #4263 retired Brisbane Tugs.

Bill Jones passed away 7th Jan 2016 after 12 months being in and out of doctor's surgery. Bill was a seaman on Brisbane Tugs for 30 years and as the Secretary of the rolling fund. Bill was known better as Arab (Barbary Bill).

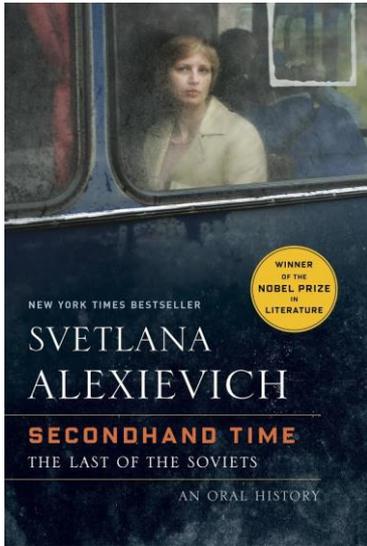
Bill my old ship mate I will miss you forever and with the outgoing and incoming tides we will remember you. Bill's ashes will be scattered in the boat passage at Lytton. There will be poem read on the day called-

#### *Remember Me:*

*To the living, I am gone. To the sorrowful, I will never return. To the angry, I was cheated, But to the happy, I am at peace, And to the faithful, I have never left. I cannot be seen, but I can be heard. So as you stand upon a shore, gazing at a beautiful sea – remember me. As you look in awe at a mighty forest and its grand majesty – remember me. As you look upon a flower and admire its simplicity – remember me. Remember me in your heart, your thoughts, your memories of the times we loved, the times we cried, the times we fought, the times we laughed. For if you always think of me, I will never be gone. Margaret Mead, American writer and poet (1901 – 1978)*

### **Book Review**

Svetlana Alexievich won the Nobel Prize in 2015 for her book on the Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster, however I think she was awarded the revered prize too early, because her current book 'Secondhand Time' is a journalistic masterpiece.



The book is a series of interviews with Russian people from across Russia, Ukraine and the ex-Soviet Caucasus states. It inquires into their personal lives and suffering since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. The book has a complex structure and is grouped into long and often impressionistic interviews that fall into four main psychological clusters: those who want the old Soviet Union

back and long for the iron hand of Stalin; those who were desperate to escape Stalin's and the NKVD terrors and wanted communism to fall but are disappointed in the 'freedom' of capitalism that they thought would bring so much more opportunity; those who fell victim in the immediate springing up of nationalism in the break-away dependent states such as Georgia; and those who have been so brutalised both by being victims and executioners in the Soviet times that they have lost their minds.

Alexievich is a silent interviewer. She opens the interviews with questions about love, children, past times, the future, dreams, moral ideals, but the book is entirely made up of the words of real Soviet people who lived through the change of their world and are now Russians. One thing that stood out to me was how much people used to read and the high value they placed on books and poetry in the Soviet Union compared to their lives under capitalism. Although the standard of living has risen in the cities, many rural people have fallen into unemployment and personal ruin and the subsequent upsurge of nationalism and racism is very worrying. Alcoholism is now endemic amongst men.

I was riveted by this book and it is my personal pick of books for 2016. I hope with this small review there will be one other person who reads it and finds in it as much value as I did.

Dr Melissa White

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