



RTBU

POWER

OF

UNION

KEEPING THE RTBU STRONG



OUR
DELEGATES
ARE OUR
STRENGTH

The more things change, the more they stay the same. Our Union has undergone a transformation over the past five years. We have become more professional in the way we operate, and more relevant on the national stage. We have risen to the challenge of a fierce anti-worker Federal Government, and muscled up to belligerent employers.

Along the way we have introduced a governance framework that is the envy of the movement. We have strengthened the way we engage with members. We have lifted our profile in national affairs. And we are embracing affirmative action to give women a stronger voice in the Union.

But one thing hasn't changed – the commitment and passion of our delegates.

Indeed, delegates have been the heart and soul of our Union since 1861. They are heroes of our past, and the key to our future.

That's why the focus of our national priorities for the next two years should be on building the skills and capabilities of our workplace delegates.

The proposals outlined in this document build on the work achieved in the past five years. They involve:

- Creating a national online Delegates Portal;
- Providing a National Delegates Coordinator out of the National Office;
- Introducing a National Delegate of the Year Award to recognise the outstanding contributions our delegates make to our Union;
- Running a National Delegates Conference and
- Resourcing a National Non-Financial Call Centre to build membership and density.

By investing even more in our delegates, we will keep our Union strong and powerful, to provide even better representation for our 35,000 members across the country.

We look forward to discussing these proposal and many other important issues during the National Council.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Nanva'.

Bob Nanva
National Secretary



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Altieri'.

Phil Altieri
National President

Initiative 1: Building a National Online Delegates Portal

The role of Delegates is varied, and increasingly multi-faceted. Having ready access to information and materials is essential for Delegates to be able to respond to the wide variety of situations they face in the workplace.

With the completion of the new National Office website, we now have the opportunity to build a dedicated Delegates Portal. The Delegates Portal will be password protected, and will include a comments section where Delegates can ask questions and provide feedback about their own experiences in the workplace.

A key ingredient in local workplace power is the confidence of our Delegates and their networks of support. That's why the portal will have a focus on ensuring key industrial information is at our Delegate's fingertips and provides a forum to engage with other Delegates from geographically and organisationally diverse workplaces.

“ Access to an online portal will arm Delegates with the right tools to help them provide the first line of defense for our members. ”

Information to be available on the Delegates Portal:

- The RTBU Bargaining Kit.
- A Model Enterprise Agreement, with best practice clauses.
- A guide to running disputes under your Enterprise Agreement.
- Links to the Fair Work Commission Unfair Dismissal Handbook and General Protections Handbook.
- An on-line function where Delegates can ask questions of the National lawyer and/or organisers.
- Training packages, industry policies, research and campaign materials.
- Information about the latest issues and events.
- Information about Delegate's rights, entitlements, roles and responsibilities.
- Other ready-to-access material for Delegates.



Steph Johnstone <

RTBU Delegate



> **Peter Harvey**
RTBU Delegate

Initiative 2: Coordinating our National Delegates Training

The RTBU has a proud history of developing confident and active delegates with strong networks at the workplace. An important part of our success story is the training our delegates receive and the networks they develop. This is particularly critical given the important decision making roles many of our delegates have in our union and on the job.

Training

Good training leads to good Delegates, but great training leads to great Delegates and a stronger union. That's why we must keep working to ensure that our Delegate training packages are of the highest standard, and give workplace Delegates the updated skill-sets they need to perform their important role.

The National Office will work with Branches and Divisions to make sure every RTBU Delegate in every part of the country has access to training packages that are the envy of other Unions.

Supporting our Delegates

The National Office will provide resources as required to Branches and Divisions to assist with Delegate mentoring and development – including building broader networks of support with union staff, other delegates and members nationally.

Raising the bar on Delegate training & development:

- Provide a dedicated resource in National Office to work with Branches and Divisions on training issues, and to provide Delegate training as required
- Develop RTBU specific training modules for new Delegates that are tailor-made to the needs of Branches and Divisions
- Develop 'train the trainer' materials and courses to assist Branches and Divisions to implement new training modules
- A National Delegate Coordinator to support Branches and Divisions in identifying, mentoring and developing new activists and Delegates, with a priority on national operators

Initiative 3: Organising a National Delegates Conference

Our Delegates are the RTBU's first line of defense against employer attacks on our members, our wages and our conditions. Employers who are receiving the same advice by national law firms and industry groups are increasingly orchestrating many of their attacks in a similar fashion.

Given the increased use of the national industrial relations system and the growth in businesses operating across state borders – it has never been more important to ensure our Delegates take a more collaborative approach to sharing campaigning, bargaining, and industrial knowledge.

The challenges faced by many Delegates in one Branch or Division may have already been encountered elsewhere by delegates in another Branch or Division.

Furthermore, our Delegates will also be better able to exploit some legal victories, or defend the Union against legal hurdles, that may have already arisen elsewhere in the union under the *Fair Work Act*.

This cross-flow of information, resources, skills and knowledge amongst delegates nationally will ensure they are forewarned and armed to better respond to threats faced by the union at a national level.

Every conference will be aimed at arming Delegates to take up the fight even harder at their local workplaces.

The RTBU National Delegates Conference:

- A briefing by the RTBU National Lawyer on the basic legal information, cases and precedents from across Australia.
- A run through of RTBU template enterprise agreement clauses, including the application of dispute and consultation clauses.
- Share campaigning and bargaining skills and techniques that have succeeded across Australia.
- Develop and distribute industry intelligence on employers – especially those operating across state borders.
- Highlight successful strategies on major Union activities including industrial action; activist identification and recruitment and voting for agreements.



Mina Choi <
RTBU Delegate

A portrait of Rod Spinks, a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair and blue eyes. He is wearing a dark blue polo shirt. The background is a blurred outdoor scene, possibly a waterfront or a park, with a mountain visible in the distance. The lighting is soft, suggesting late afternoon or early morning. On the left side of the image, there is a vertical decorative element consisting of a series of parallel diagonal lines.

> **Rod Spinks**
RTBU Delegate

Initiative 4: Creating a National Delegate of the Year Award

While being an RTBU Delegate can be extremely rewarding and satisfying, it can sometimes be something of a thankless task. Not only is it a voluntary position, it can involve many hours work, and a significant amount of pressure.

It is entirely appropriate for the Union to give something back by recognising the work, sacrifice and achievements of Delegates.

It's time for the work and dedication of our Delegates to be formally recognised. By establishing a Delegate of the Year Award, we can not only recognise some of the great work being done by our Delegates, we can also showcase our successes and inspire others to become actively involved in our Union.

Pending consultation with the Mabo family, it is proposed we name the award the Eddie Kaiko Mabo Award for Outstanding Achievement. Linking the award to the achievements of former RTBU member Eddie Kaiko Mabo will not only acknowledge the contribution of Mr Mabo to the RTBU, it will also highlight the potential for individual RTBU members and Delegates to achieve things that change the country.

Each Delegate of the Year will be rewarded with a training package to be paid for by the National Office to improve their qualifications; or an iPad.

“ Our Delegates do amazing work. It's only right that we tell their stories. ”

Process for the Delegate of the Year Award:

- Each Branch to select three outstanding delegates to be considered for the national award.
- Profiles of each finalist to be posted on the RTBU national website.
- A 50% member vote will be held using the website and 50% vote to be given to the ACTU Secretary and President.
- The winner to be announced at a dinner in conjunction with the National Executive and the National Council.

Initiative 5: Developing a National Growth Campaign

Maintaining our Union density, and increasing Union membership across our industries, is vital to protecting and building our industrial strength.

While the total membership of the Union remains around 35,000, there are a number of challenges that have the potential to undermine our membership base. These challenges include job cuts at many of our major employers, and the growing trend towards casualisation and labour hire.

A national growth campaign, to be branded *Power in Union*, will focus attention on the benefits of Union membership with nationally consistent campaign materials to be prepared by the National Office. All National Office officials and employees will spend a full week in each branch during the campaign to work with local organisers to meet and sign prospective members.

National Office will also separately staff a call-centre for one week to assist in converting unfinancial members into financial members. Branches will also be encouraged to provide volunteers to help staff the call-centre during this period.

National Growth Campaign Program and Materials:

- A week-long intensive by all National Officials and Staff in every branch during August to recruit new members under the guidance of local organisers.
- Separate staffing of a call-centre to convert unfinancial members into financial members.
- Nationally consistent flyers outlining benefits of membership.
- Preparation, design and distribution of materials concerning a recruitment campaign for each Branch and/or Division.
- RTBU Power In Union stickers.
- RTBU Power In Union t-shirts.
- Member and Delegate testimonials.

“The most significant predictor of union power is the overall quality or usefulness of training, as rated by the delegates.”

David Peetz and Barbara Pocock, Griffith University.



> **Matt Sara**
RTBU Delegate



RTBU



RTBU

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