

AUGUST NEWS

Automation Safety Concerns

Recent incidents involving automated equipment and manned vehicles have again raised safety concerns of the automated system and in particular, the cumbersome front runner system. Having automated vehicles sharing the same roads as manned vehicles is a disaster waiting to happen and is an issue that needs immediate attention before a tragedy occurs.

Can you believe automated haul trucks don't have working indicators when in auto mode? We couldn't when we asked the question why in 2014, four years later and the same problem still exists. We are currently compiling a file of automated equipment incidents and plan to liaise with the relevant regulatory bodies to ensure safety standards are being adhered to at automated sites. If you have any information which you feel may be useful please contact WMWA Organiser Andrew on 0417006100 or email Andrew.smith@wmwa.org.au

Overpayment Issues Continue

Following on from an article we ran a few months ago, there continues to be an alarming number of overpayment issues being brought forth by members to the Union. These alleged overpayments have ranged from a few hundred dollars through to several thousand and in some cases more. In all cases a letter, email or even a phone call has been received stating that an overpayment has occurred with no description of what this overpayment relates to or when it occurred. The correspondence then goes on to state that a "recovery of overpayment authority form" must be completed and returned within 14 days.

WMWA advice to members in this situation is simple, if Rio Tinto is claiming an overpayment has occurred get in touch with an Organiser **asap**. Workers have rights in overpayment situations including a clear breakdown of how the overpayment happened and when.

Taking the time to call can save you a lot of hassle and potentially a lot of money, another reason why **it pays to be in the Union!**

Opportunistic Terminations

There has been a spike in the amount of 'opportunistic' terminations of workers across the Pilbara. At present Rio Tinto will attempt to terminate workers for what in the past had been a minor incident with at most a Note to File recorded.



In a recent case, a member was being terminated for 'allegedly' running over a windrow. In this case, the member was working for Rio Tinto at this particular mine for only 12 months and had no disciplinary history. At the 'show cause' stage (show cause is generally 24 hours to state your case to overturn a termination) we managed to state that termination was harsh, unjust and unreasonable in large part due to the minor incident and due to the clean record.

Without the assistance of the Union this worker would have been terminated and had to go through the process of seeking employment whilst moving out of the residential mining town with his young family all for 'allegedly' running over a windrow.

Rio Tinto is increasing the discipline on workers by terminations, written warnings and taking away or halving of bonuses. Many members believe the progress of AHS and increasing labour hire are factors. The \$20 billion cost saving by 2020 is also a factor, as it is much cheaper to terminate when the opportunity arises than doing the right thing and making someone redundant when the need arises.

The WMWA will not assist new members with pre - existing issues. It is simply not fair on our existing members to accept these often complex and time consuming cases.

As they say you "can't insure your house once, it has burnt down"

Insure your employment today - Join the Union today, . <http://www.wmwa.org.au/join>

For any questions, comments or to join:

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