



**AMIEU**  
NEWCASTLE & NORTHERN

ISSUE **DEC**  
**75** | **2016**

MAKING MCDONALDS PATTIES FOR 20 CENTS AN HOUR

# PRISON LABOUR

IT'S HAPPENING IN THE USA, AND IT'S ON THE WAY HERE



**COLES DODGY  
DEAL DEAD**

*jobs*

# SAVED

*at Ingham*

CARDIFF MEMBERS WIN  
THANKS TO YOUR UNION

FORCING COLES BACK  
TO THE BARGAINING TABLE



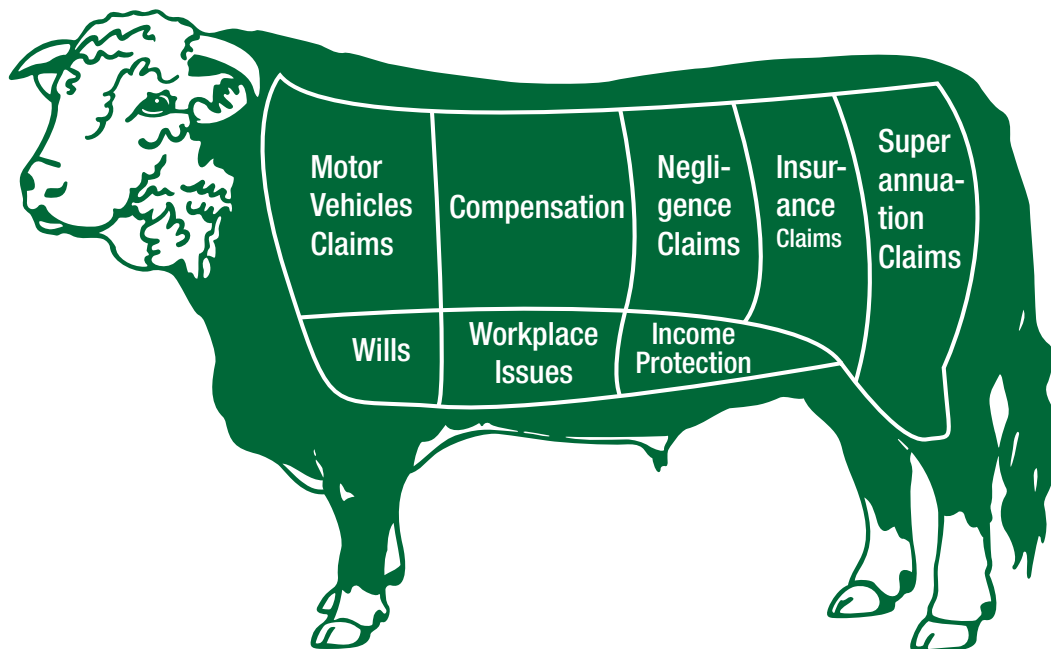
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WASTES TIME

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## secretary's REPORT

# Ups and Downs in Northern NSW

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Welcome comrades to another edition of the Meat Workers Journal.

Unfortunately despite our best efforts in July, Australia's drunken uncle Barnaby Joyce was re-elected in the seat of Tamworth, where he wasted no time by continuing with his plan to sideline meat workers and direct money towards live exporters instead.

As all of our members know, cattle numbers in Australia are currently at a record 30-year low. Times are tough, and meat workers are feeling the squeeze. Nearly all of our red meat plants across northern NSW are on reduced production levels, some as low as two days a week.

Meanwhile, Barnaby Joyce continues to brag about the record high prices of live export cattle and how valuable the live export industry is -- even though it produces almost no jobs for Australians, and lines the pockets of the rich instead of letting that money flow through to committed workers like you.

But perhaps we shouldn't be surprised -- after all, Barnaby and his family took no less than six private flights in a charter jet around Australia last year. Who paid for these flights? Live export supplier Stanbroke, of course.

Shame on you, Barnaby Joyce.

But come hell, high water, or even the re-election of Barnaby Joyce, the AMIEU has work to do -- and we've been doing it.

## Four new EBAs locked in

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We've negotiated three new Enterprise Bargaining Agreements since our last Journal. New agreements are now in place at Baiada Tamworth, PFD, Norco Lismore and Nestle Smithtown.

Baiada Tamworth workers are now taking home an extra \$18 per week, while PFD workers are bringing home an extra \$22.50. Workers at Nestle Smithtown are taking home an extra \$33, and workers at Norco Lismore are enjoying an extra take-home pay of \$24.

These are great new agreements that offer substantial pay rises above the cost of inflation, and we consider these to be especially valuable wins at a time when employers are offering some of the worst pay rises in living memory.

Look at Teys in Tamworth for example -- they offered their workers a terrible 12-month agreement that resulted in the loss of a range of hard-won conditions secured over the last 15 years of worker progress.

All of this at a time when **Tey's profits are up 400%**. Yes, you read that right! Teys profits are up 400% and

they still say that they could only afford to offer a 2% pay rise. In fact their CEO is **so rich** that he wrote to the Government last year asking to be exempt from having to report his income, because he was worried about people trying to kidnap him!

The terrible agreement at Teys Tamworth has now been voted up, thanks to a very dodgy, non-secure SMS 'Yes' or 'No' mobile phone system that Teys have grown fond of using. Very disturbing stuff.

In a time like this, we're very happy to have helped the workers at Baiada Tamworth, PFD, Norco and Nestle secure great EBAs that pay them the rates they deserve. This is exactly the sort of great outcome that you get when working people stand together and fight.

## Federal Council 2016

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September 2016 saw all the heads of the AMIEU meeting for the week-long bi-annual Federal Council. We were successful in passing amendments so that a 'one vote, one value' system has been introduced to the election process of federal officers.

Previously, having more members in a branch gave that branch a bigger say in how Federal decisions were made, rather than giving every branch a fair say. We've now changed that so that every branch gets a fair vote for future decisions of the AMIEU!

## Justice for the exploited

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As we come into December, the AMIEU is gearing up to take on labour hire contractor AWX in a landmark court case. AWX is one of the worst labour hire firms around and we have clashed with them many times before over their continued exploitation of visa workers at poultry plants all across the nation.

We have evidence showing that AWX wilfully and continually exploited visa workers, paying them far below award rates. This is a slippery, dangerous operator that has created so many shell companies around itself and false trails to hide from the law that it's taken us a very long time to pin them down.

We are determined to defeat once and for all one of the worst agreements covering meat workers, a

shitty agreement established under the infamous WorkChoices at the height of the John Howard union-bashing era.

The AMIEU is committed to helping workers who were exploited under that agreement to recover their stolen money. I am confident that the courts will agree with us and that I will be able to tell you all about our victory in the next Secretary's Report.

## Cardiff closure hits hard

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To end on a bittersweet note, the closure of the Inghams Cardiff plant has been a real black spot in our calendar this year and has hit our members (and therefore the AMIEU) very hard.

We remain very disappointed and disgusted with the way the closure was handled. It is very clear to us from talking to Ingham management and from reviewing the documentation that this was a greedy decision made by investment bankers purely to shore up an asset before a big corporate sell-off.

What these rich bankers in their board room in the United States fail to grasp, is that their decision will impact real people and real communities.

But there is a silver lining -- thanks to the strength of union members working together, the AMIEU was able to secure new employment for more than 100 Cardiff workers. Many of them have transitioned over to work at Baiada in Beresfield, a few minutes down the road. Others have gone further afield.

I regret that we could not help everyone, but I am proud of those we were able to help. I am also proud that we were able to negotiate one of the **absolute best redundancy packages this industry has ever seen** for our workers, and that we were able to make sure so many received their proper entitlements.

I wish all the best to those of us affected by this greedy, selfish shut-down.

Yours in solidarity,

---

**Grant Courtney**  
**BRANCH SECRETARY**

# VICTORY

## **This brazen attempt to steal money from meat workers is now officially dead.**

The broken, unfair deal cooked up between the corporate-loving SDA and Coles has officially been killed, with Coles refusing the Fair Work Commission's request to alter it so that no worker would be worse off.

This massive win for workers will see tens of thousands of young Coles employees, predominantly those who work the high penalty-rate shifts that nobody else wants such as nights and weekends, awarded the large amounts in back pay that they would have earned in the first place if Coles and the SDA hadn't worked together to take them away.

This victory is an unequivocal vindication of what the Meat Workers Union has been saying since 2013 when we first began to raise concerns about the SDA's dangerous new assault on workers. We applaud young Coles worker Duncan Hart who took a stand against this underhanded strategy and we're extremely proud to have helped him deal the killing blow.

# FORRY

The SDA has similar cosy deals in place at McDonalds and Woolworths, both of which are using the same strategy of tricking workers by slightly raising their base rate but slashing their penalty rates.

All employers should now be taking note of the decision by the Fair Work Commission, which sets a precedent for anybody attempting the same dirty and underhanded tactic – a tactic which FairFax media estimates saves McDonalds \$50 million each year in wages.

In a notice to their members outlining the decision, the SDA condemned Coles unwillingness to improve the current deal while still refusing to acknowledge just how bad their deal was in the first place.

All the SDA was willing to admit was that “some workers” who work penalty-rate-heavy shifts “could” be disadvantaged – a far cry from the findings of the Fair Work Commission, who used the SDA’s own calculations to show that workers were going to lose thousands.

## **Coles admits to underpaying meat workers**

After wasting millions of dollars on lawyers at the Fair Work Commission trying to defend its dodgy deal with the SDA, Coles has now finally admitted that meat workers will receive back payments.

Documents seen by the AMIEU show that Coles is now preparing to go through their national roster of meat workers and calculate how much is owed – a strange about-face from the company which just last month was insisting that “no employee was worse off” under its agreement with the SDA.

**We are about to start the process of negotiations with Coles and are exploring all possibilities to get our meat workers what they deserve.**

### **There is a new union for retail workers!**

The Retail and Fast Food Workers Union has just formed in November 2016 and is looking to represent workers at Coles, Woolworths and other places. Learn more at [www.raffwu.org.au](http://www.raffwu.org.au)

# THOMAS FORCED TO BACK CALLING POLICE

## TFI caught out illegally blocking union access to lunchroom

Thomas Foods in Murray Bridge, South Australia have been forced into a humiliating backdown after calling the police on the AMIEU, only for the police to tell them the union had every right to be there.

The Murray Bridge site has two separate lunchrooms, both of which are regularly serviced by visiting AMIEU officials.

In early October however, Thomas Foods management decided, suddenly and with no explanation, that one of the two lunchrooms was off limits to the AMIEU.

Needless to say, union officers ignored this unlawful

order and moved into the lunchroom as normal.

A flustered Thomas Foods management then called the police to have these troublesome union officers ejected – only to be disappointed when the police arrived and pointed out the union was obeying the law and was entitled to speak to workers.

This sort of behaviour isn't new from employers, and it's not even the first time Thomas Foods in Murray Bridge have tried it. Thomas Foods believes in the American model of food processing, where unions are the enemy, workers should be paid the minimum wage, and lunch breaks are a distant memory.

The story doesn't end there: the AMIEU is now investigating whether or not Thomas Foods violated WHS requirements by bringing police onto the site without face covers, breathing masks or Q-fever vaccinations. In their rush to have the union kicked out, it's very likely that Thomas Foods exposed the



**Fever in its rush to get rid of the nasty union**

# STRENGTHEN YOUR FOODS WORK DOWN AFTER POLICE ON AMIEU

police to unnecessary risk and the possibility of infection.

We will keep fighting every day for your right to a safe workplace and strong wages and conditions. But if the Liberals and their mates in big business "productivity commissions" have their way, you won't be able to talk to your union for much longer.

The Turnbull Government has already announced that they are looking to make changes to further attack workers just like you, including cracking down on when unions are allowed on site

to speak to members.

This will mean that if you are being bullied or harassed, or if you're working in a dangerous or unsafe environment, you won't be able to talk to anybody about it.

Working people need to stand together now more than ever. Stand up for yourself and for others like you by joining the union

online now.

**WANT A DISCOUNT ON YOUR UNION FEES?**

Get 10% off when you pay your six monthly membership fees UP FRONT before July 31 and Jan 31 each year.

**That's a saving of \$49.40 per year.**  
Call the office on (02) 4929 5496.



# *jobs* **SAVED** *at Ingham*

**On August 18 2016, Ingham Cardiff closed its doors for the last time.**

350 poultry workers are only the first casualties of this greedy decision, a decision made in a board room on the other side of the world by an enormous multinational, multi-billion dollar private equity firm.

Local Cardiff businesses and families are now feeling the pinch as these workers no longer bring money into the area.

But it's not all bad news. Thanks to strong union membership and workers standing up for each other, the AMIEU was able to secure employment for more than 100 Cardiff workers, including jobs at the nearby Beresfield Baiada plant.

Union member Patricia Cossini is one of those workers, and she has the union to thank for securing her redundancy pay as well.

"They didn't pay my long service leave, even though I talked to the supervisor four times," remembers Patricia. "Jason (Roe) took one look at my paperwork, and told me he'd sort it -- and he did!"

"Jason and Ian (Tam), the union boys, they've been great -- you ask them questions, they jump right to it for you. I really thank the union for the help and for the new job. Steggles is a good job with decent people."



Photos from the final day

# Are you a casual worker who became permanent?



The Fair Work Commission has sent a number of employers scrambling to re-think their policies after a precedent-setting decision in August that will see workers have their time as a casual employee taken into account when receiving redundancy payouts.

The case was championed by our comrades in the AMWU, who successfully appealed to a full bench of the Fair Work Commission by arguing that years spent as a casual employee should count at the time a permanent employee is made redundant.

Although this decision does not mean that casual employees are now eligible for redundancy payouts, what it does mean is that **permanent employees should receive redundancy payouts that include the time they spent working as a casual before becoming permanent.**

The increasing casualisation of the workforce is an enormous issue across many Australian industries, and the meat processing industry has been one of the hardest hit by this dangerous trend.

Where once the meat industry prided itself on providing local, honest, reliable, long-term employment for the hard-working Australian (and it has continued to use that image in its marketing) the reality is that many meat processing companies are now multi-billion dollar mega-corporations overwhelmingly reliant on disposable casual labour.

## The cancer in the workforce

Employers like to promote casual labour as a superior alternative to full-time employment, arguing that the higher base rate of pay makes it a more attractive idea. This line of thinking is backed by their friends in the Liberal Party, who argue that casual employment is “flexible” and gives people “options”.

For some people, casual employment is the right thing to do – but for anybody looking to build a life for themselves, to start a family, to one day own a home – casual employment is a cancer that eats away at your future. Casual employees have limited rights and no safety net. The only reason that employers like casual work is because casual workers can be sacked at any time, never get sick pay, never get holiday pay, and in the long run, actually cost the company a lot less money than employing people full-time.

Casual workers especially should never even dream about their work counting towards a redundancy payout – until now.

## Fighting back

One of our primary goals at the AMIEU has been to push back against this casualisation trend by campaigning hard at our work sites for employers to transition people from casual to full- or part-time status, as soon as is reasonably possible. In some places we've been very successful, while in other workplaces – ones with low union representation – we continue to fight.

This decision paves the way for meat workers who have successfully transitioned from casual to permanent employment to breathe slightly easier in as the crisis gripping Australia's meat industry continues to cost jobs across the country.

Recent closures like the deeply unnecessary and greedy shut-down of Inghams in Cardiff highlight the need for workers to have a safety net that will support them when things go south. We welcome the Fair Work Commission's decision and encourage all permanent employees who were once casuals to make strong note of what this means for their future.

Do you have a Facebook account?

# LIKE us on Facebook

and make sure you're always up to date with the very latest news in our industry!



Just search for '**AMIEU Newcastle**' in your web browser or in the Facebook app on your smartphone.

Then once you've found us, press the '**Like**' button to subscribe to our news and updates!



We're also on Twitter  
and Instagram!



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## IMPORTANT - PLEASE READ

# 10 CENTS FEE INCREASE

The Committee of Management reviews union dues each year on an annual basis.

At a meeting on August 28 this year, the Committee passed a resolution determining that dues will be rising from \$9.40 per week to \$9.50 per week.

The new rates will take effect on January 1 2017.



Baiada

UNION MEMBERS WIN AGAIN

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# **BAIADA MADE TO KEEP ITS PROMISE ON RDOS**

**U**nion members have had another great win at Baiada's Beresfield site, after the national poultry giant agreed to make good on its promises around restoring rostered days off to their workforce.

Members at the site were guaranteed two RDOs per month under their agreement. But last year, when the company was struggling to find chicken to process, they proposed to cut one of the RDOs in order to keep processing levels at normal.

Because union members at Baiada are so strong and organised, the company knew that the standard tactic of just forcing changes on your workforce wasn't going to fly. They came to the negotiating table, and our members generously agreed to make the sacrifice and help the company out.

After two months of this arrangement, production numbers had returned to normal -- but Baiada showed no signs of bringing back the lost RDO. It was only when our smart, motivated union members stood up and demanded the company keep its promise that their rights were restored.

But as all union members know, the fight is never over.



Baiada is now looking to make more changes as we move into the hot summer weather, which could mean the loss of further RDOs.

They could try and force those changes on the workforce under the agreement -- but because they know how strong workers are when they stand together, they've decided to come back to the bargaining table again instead.

Our union members have agreed once again to help the company out in this tough time, striking a bargain which will keep their shift loading.

Baiada is feeling the pinch right now, with the closure of their Laverton plant in Victoria. More than 100 workers will be looking for new jobs in March next year when the plant shuts its doors.

History teaches us that when things get tough for the bosses, workers are the first ones to get hurt. And history also teach us that only a highly unionised, motivated, organised workforce can stand up and fight back.

Congratulations to all of our hard-working delegates and members at Beresfield for your courage and conviction.



# USING SOCIAL MEDIA SAFELY

Can you be sacked for what you say? How can you control who sees your posts? Our guidelines will help you stay safe.

## 5 SIMPLE STEPS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

**1 Don't add your managers or supervisors as friends.**

Even if you like and trust your bosses, it's better to be safe than sorry. **Do not feel pressured to accept friend requests from managers or supervisors.** They have no right to your private time outside of work.

**2 Use private channels if you need to vent.**

If you need to vent about something at work, use a private channel like Facebook Messenger or a Twitter Direct Message. Even better, **take it offline** and make a phone call or send an SMS.

**3 Don't use social media at work.**

There are strict rules about using your phone at work. Make sure you are familiar with them. Do not take photos of your work site, and do not post them online. **When you are on company time, obey the company rules.**

**4 Don't rant when you're tired, angry or drunk.**

If you've had a few beers, or you're really upset about something, it's a bad time to go online. You'll say something you'll regret. Put your phone or laptop away until you've slept on it and **had a chance to calm down.**

**5 Be careful about mentioning where you work.**

If you include information in your profile about where you work, **the company might think your statements represent them.** In this case, they will be upset and may discipline you if your posts are racist, sexist or otherwise reflect badly on them.

**The golden rule:  
THINK BEFORE  
YOU POST.  
Follow this rule and  
you'll be fine.**



# HOW TO SECURE YOUR ACCOUNTS



## FACEBOOK

- Review your Privacy Settings regularly by clicking on the **padlock icon** at the top of the screen (on a browser) or opening the menu and scrolling down to **Privacy Shortcuts** on the smartphone app.
- Make sure your posts are set to be seen by **Friends Only** (people icon) and not **Public** (globe icon)
- Take the Privacy Checkup to have Facebook walk you through a detailed tour of how to lock your account down from prying eyes.



## TWITTER

**All Twitter accounts are Public by default.** If you want to choose who can read your posts, you must make your account Protected.

- **In a browser:** Click on your avatar and then click on Settings. Then click on **Security and Privacy** in the left hand menu
- **In the smartphone app:** Open the left-hand menu and press Settings. Then press Privacy and Content.
- Then, check the box labelled **Protect My Tweets** and save the changes. Now, nobody will be able to see what you post unless you approve them to do so first.



## INSTAGRAM

You must use the Instagram smartphone app to secure your account.

- Go to your **profile** by tapping the icon of the person.
- Then, tap on the **gear** icon (iPhone or Windows Phone) or the **three dots** (Android).
- Then, turn on **Private Account**.

## FAQ

### Can I be sued for what I say about the company online?

Your employer may threaten to sue you for defamation if you are caught making **public posts** about the company that they have reason to believe are false and could damage the company's reputation.

Something as simple as you saying "the company sucks" or having a vent about a hard day is not the same as defamation.

It is difficult for a company to prove they would suffer damage to their reputation, and they would always ask you to simply remove the offending material first rather than take you through the court system.

### But what if the thing I'm saying is true?

If you're just sharing how you feel about something, that's different. That's your personal opinion. You cannot be sued for that.

However, if you have serious allegations about criminal or ethical misconduct at your employer, **bring it to our attention at the union and do not post it online**. We will advise you on how to proceed and get you help.

### Can the company sack me for the way I behave online?

If you publicly state that you are an employee of a company and then act in a way that might damage the company's reputation (for example, racism, sexism or abuse), the company may have grounds to terminate you.

In all cases, it is best both to avoid such behaviour and to avoid listing your employer's name on your profile.

### **WORRIED? SPEAK TO YOUR UNION.**

*The advice given here is general in nature only and should not be relied on as legal advice. Contact your union branch as soon as possible if you need legal advice.*



*dealing with the*  
**DOWNTURN**

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## **It can be difficult to stay positive when times are so tough for our industry.**

Australian meat workers are going through one of the toughest periods in industry history.

Meat workers all across Australia are being put off work or made redundant, as plants close down permanently or simply shut their doors until the cattle supply improves.

As workers, we spend a lot of time making sure our work sites are physically safe and free of danger -- but we don't always take the time to look after our minds.

## **You're not alone.**

In any one year, more than 1 million Australian adults will suffer from depression. More than 2 million will suffer from anxiety. **Eight Australians take their lives every day.**

A record cattle shortage and constant attacks by the live export industry mean that families all across Australia are finding it difficult to put food on the table.

When your job is on the line, it can be tough to keep your chin up and remain positive. Mental health issues aren't visible like scars or wounds, and sometimes people can be ashamed to talk about how they feel, so they put on a happy face and try to hide behind the mask.

Mental health issues are just as important as physical health issues and you need to start thinking about them - and treating them - with the same seriousness.

Depression comes in many forms - it's not just "feeling sad". In many cases it can be "feeling nothing at all". If you think something isn't right, it's time to talk.

Talk to your friends. Ask them how they're feeling. Talk to your co-workers, especially if they've seemed distant or quiet.

Talk to your doctor. They will test you for symptoms of depression, and may be able to help you into bulk-billed psychologist sessions, or talk to you about medicines that can help you through this tough time.

Talk to your union. Our officials can point you in the right direction and help make changes to improve your workplace.

There is light at the end of the tunnel. The cattle situation is already starting to improve. But don't let your mental health become a casualty of the meat industry crisis.

**If you are feeling depressed or anxious, call BeyondBlue on 1300 22 4636.**

**If you are having suicidal thoughts or thinking about harming yourself, call LifeLine now on 13 11 14.**

# STEP UP AND join the union

## UP TO 25% BETTER PAY

Union workers on average get paid 25% more than non-union workers\* (**yes, really!**), and have their disputes resolved faster.

When you join the union, you empower yourself and your co-workers to speak with one, loud voice. This gives you leverage at the bargaining table to negotiate the kind of pay rises and great conditions you deserve.

## LEGAL SUPPORT

Dismissed unfairly? Harassed at work? We have your back and we will fight for you.

**Union members have access to the finest legal representation.** To fight these battles on your own would cost you thousands of dollars just to be heard.

## QUALITY TOOLS

Union members have access to the industry's best quality tools at cost prices. We buy the finest and we pass the savings on to you. **Ask your visiting officer for a catalogue, or call the office.**

## INJURY SUPPORT FOR YOU AND THE FAMILY

Your union membership automatically includes a **To And From Work Benefit** so that you won't lose out on pay if you have an accident.

We also provide an **Emergency Transport Benefit** that covers ambulance costs for you and your family so that you're not out of pocket.

Both of these benefits are included and do not cost anything extra!

*\*Australian Bureau of Statistics, Characteristics of Employment Report, 27 October 2015*

plus

- **UNION FEES ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE**
- **GREAT DEALS THROUGH UNION SHOPPER**
- **FREE WILL SERVICE**



*Update*

## NEW ZEALAND MEAT WORKERS WIN COURT BATTLE WITH TALLEYS

The New Zealand Meat Workers Union has scored another victory in their ongoing fight against Talleys, who you may remember in our last journal we described as “the worst company in the world” – the company that literally tried to get a worker sacked for reading a newsletter.

New Zealand’s Court of Appeal has again ruled in favour of the Meat Workers Union, finding that Talleys lockout of its workers in June 2015 was unlawful. This would be the second time that a court has ruled the lockout unlawful – the New Zealand Employment Court found the lockout was illegal in a judgement handed down last November.

Talleys, an extremely profitable company with money to burn and a hatred of unions hot enough to start the fire, went to the Court of Appeals. Now, after almost a year of stalling later, their unlawful behaviour has been thrown out for a second time.

This sort of behaviour isn’t new to Talleys, a company more than happy to break the law – and more than able to pay the fines – if it means getting what it wants.

After all, this is the same company that illegally donates millions of dollars to anti-worker political parties, illegally prevents union representatives from entering the workplace, and thinks women are better suited to jobs like pole-dancing than filleting fish.

The ruling by the Court in early October put into clear terms what Talleys was trying to achieve, calling them out for attempting to “fragment the future bargaining strength of the workforce by isolating individual workers”.

“By this means it took advantage of the inherent inequality of its relationship with the seasonal workers who were members of its captive workforce, and to whom it owed existing duties to offer re-employment,” concluded the judge.

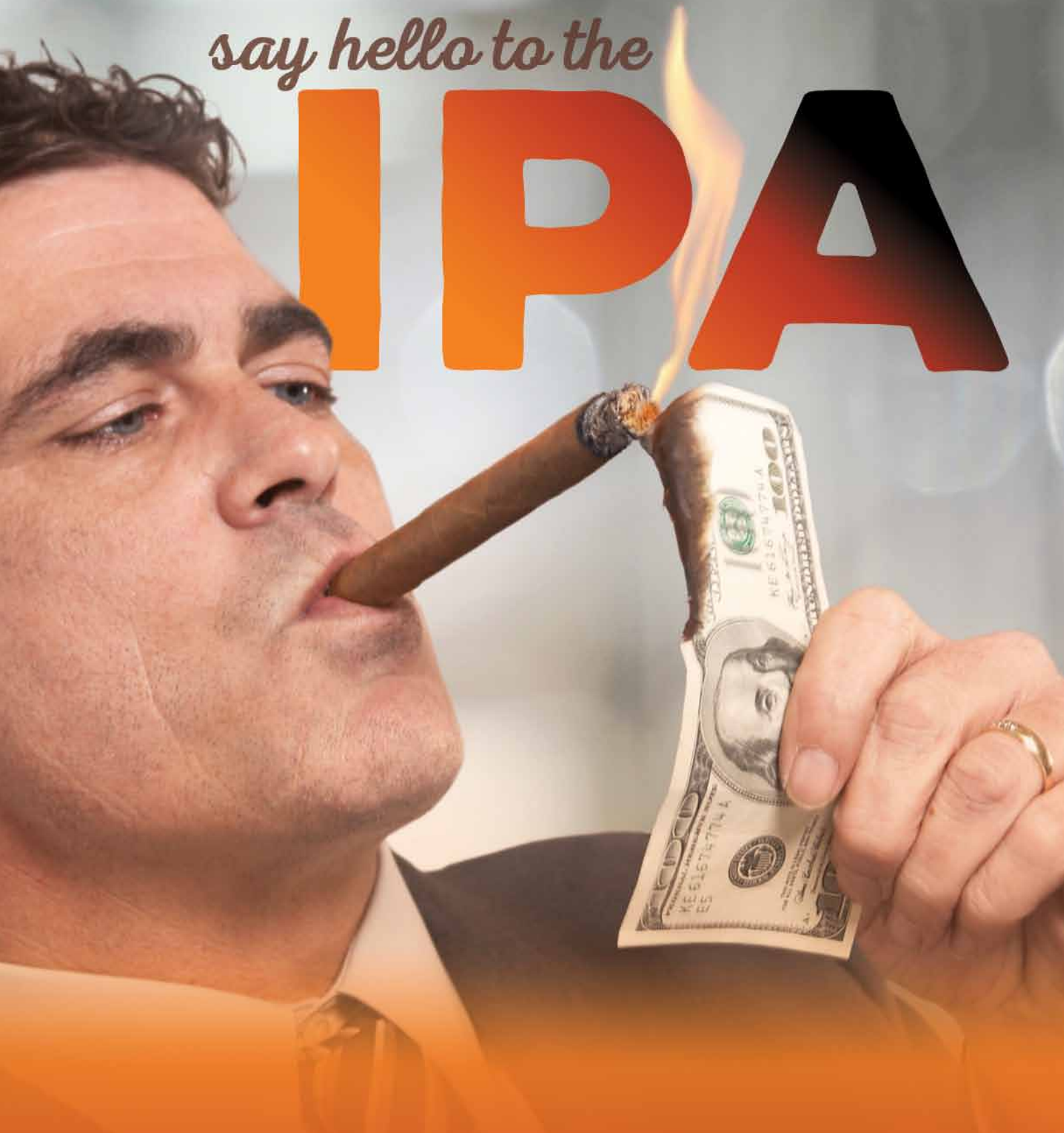
It’s a classic play by Talleys and by bosses going back hundreds of years – **divide and conquer**. Keep your workers fragmented, scattered and weak, and you’ll have no trouble getting what you want – which in this case was for the workers to agree to individual contracts that would have seen their pay slashed.

The national secretary of the Meat Workers Union in New Zealand, Graham Cooke, has welcomed the news, calling it a “major advance in human rights for meat workers – and a significant step forward for collective bargaining rights generally”.

Companies as aggressive and hostile as Talleys need to be resisted at every turn – especially when their incredibly poor workplace health and safety record means that lives are literally on the line. Congratulations to the New Zealand meat workers for their victory and for standing up to corporate bullying and anti-union violence.

*say hello to the*

**I P A**



THE RICH AND POWERFUL THINK TANK THAT WANTS TO  
**DESTROY THE MINIMUM WAGE**  
AND  
**ABOLISH THE AWARD SYSTEM**

**I**n a move that will surprise nobody, the Institute of Public Affairs – a free-market think-tank which represents the interests of the rich and powerful – released a new paper in August this year calling on their good friends in the **Turnbull Liberal Government** to abolish the award system and hand all power over wages to employers.

The IPA is an influential body with many connections to Australia's elite, and has been used as a mouthpiece for the mega-rich to push anti-worker policy for decades. Some of the world's most powerful companies regularly donate money to the IPA, including oil giants ExxonMobil and Caltex, mining giant BHP Billiton, and tobacco giants Phillip Morris and British American Tobacco.

It should come as no surprise to any meat workers that the IPA wants to see unions dead and buried (they even adorn the cover page of their new paper with an image of protesting CFMEU members). The IPA is responsible for helping to pass some of Australia's most damaging laws that have made it harder and harder for workers to stand up for themselves. Now the IPA wants to take a swing at Australia's award system and slash the minimum wage to as low as it can possibly go.

## Out of touch with real Australians

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Meat workers in Australia are doing it tough. We're in the middle of a meat industry crisis, attacked on all sides by live exporters, record cattle shortages, and aggressive employers who want to cut costs at every turn.

Working households in Australia are struggling to make ends meet, as wealthy Australians race ahead to the point where senior executives now earn 150 times what the average Australian earns each week. Public services are failing and being privatised as companies refuse to pay tax and hide their profits in secret offshore accounts.

The average salary of a meat worker in Australia is just \$40,000. How can a think-tank which regularly hosts parties attended by people like Gina Rinehart (worth \$12.9 billion) and Rupert Murdoch (worth \$16.8 billion) possibly comprehend what life is like for the people on the ground? For workers like you?

## Katie and Matt's stories

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We don't have to look hard to find people in Australia who are doing it tough. Our own members, people like Katie and Matt at Casino in northern NSW, are struggling to stay above water in an increasingly difficult economy.

Matt has five kids and only a single income, working every single Saturday so that his family can afford some wiggle room. The loss of family benefits and childcare benefits have hit Matt hard, and he's worried about what the future holds.

Katie is a single mother with three kids, and she's particularly worried about the Liberal Government's plans to slash Medicare payments – something else the IPA is recommending. Without Medicare payments, her son wouldn't have been able to get treatment for his recent injury, as the money simply isn't there. How out of touch do you have to be to think that working class people don't deserve access to support and healthcare?

## Working people standing together

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Meat workers already know that things are bad under the Liberal Government, and if Turnbull gets his way then things are going to head towards a truly terrifying American model. All working class Australians should be especially concerned, because the IPA actually thinks that Turnbull and the Liberals aren't going far enough.

Anybody who has studied history will tell you that unregulated industries mean runaway profits for companies while workers are crushed into the dirt and even killed. All of the gains and benefits that working class people enjoy today – the eight-hour day, holiday pay, sick pay, guaranteed minimum wages – these were put in place when workers stood together in unions and fought for their rights.

Multi-million-dollar mouthpieces like the IPA want to take all that away and put working class people 'back in their place'. This must not be allowed to happen – stand with your union and be part of the fight!



# **PRISON LABOUR**

**GRINDING  
MCDONALDS PATTIES  
FOR 20 CENTS AN HOUR**



**C**an you imagine working a 10-hour shift for 20 cents an hour? Can you imagine being violently beaten, knocked around with a fire hose, handcuffed and then left outside all night, face down in the dirt and rain, simply for refusing to work?

That might sound like hell, but that's the situation some prisoners in the United States Federal prison system find themselves in right now.

Whether they're making McDonalds beef patties and chicken nuggets, sewing your favourite Victoria's Secret lingerie, or flat-packing your Ikea products, the modern slavery of prison workers underpins many of the biggest names in retail.

But it looks like things are about to change. Although you won't read about it in the press, history is being made right now. The United States federal prison system is currently in the grip of the biggest inmate strike on record.

Inmates at more than 40 prisons in 24 states across the country have succeeded in organising themselves, despite massive restrictions on their communication, and constant surveillance by wardens. Using smuggled mobile phones, social media, and a strong outside support network including union officials, these prisoners are putting their tools down and refusing to work their horribly underpaid jobs.

We don't hear a lot about the United States prison system, and it may seem like it's something far away and distant – especially for us in Northern NSW. Even when we do, it's easy to look the other way or scoff when it's prisoners that being exploited, because society tells us they deserve it.

But it is worth paying attention to, because what's happening there is something that the Liberals and their mates in big business are trying to make happen here.

And it is worth caring for striking inmates, because prisoners are people too – and all workers need to stand up for each other.

All work deserves fair pay, no matter who is doing

it. When the workers are divided, that's when the bosses win. When the workers stand up for each other and show solidarity, that's when the bosses start feeling scared, and start making threats.

But for the striking prisoners, threats have been the least of their problems. In retaliation for the striking, prisoners are being tear-gassed and beaten by guards, being denied food and water, and in some cases being left out overnight, handcuffed in the yard, face down in the dirt and the rain.

One prisoner at Michigan's Kinross Correctional Facility has died as a result of being refused medical care. Administrators across the US are now blocking mail and blocking visitations to try and disrupt the coordinated activities.

All of this for the crime of not wanting to work a 20 cents an hour job grinding burger patties.

## It's coming to Australia

How did this start in the United States? It started with a sweeping programme of privatising prisons, prisons which then needed a way to turn a profit – so they started exploiting their workers.

As recently as March this year, the New South Wales Liberal Government announced plans to let private operators tender for a medium-security jail at Windsor. And that's just the beginning. The Queensland Liberal Government has been considering privatising prisons across the state since 2013. Northern Territory prisoners are already working in literal salt mines for half the award rate.

It may seem like a scary, far-away thing that doesn't concern us here in Northern NSW. But once change happens, it happens fast. Make no mistake – multinational corporations are just waiting to take advantage of an Australian workforce who only cost cents per hour, and who can be tear-gassed when they get angry and start organising.

Support your fellow workers, no matter where they are. **Everyone deserves fair pay, and everyone deserves a second chance.**



# Inquiry into the wages and conditions of people working under the 417 Working Holiday Visa Program



October 2016

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Australian Government

# Fair Work OMBUDSMAN

# Fair Work Ombudsman Finally Acknowledges Overwhelming Evidence of Backpacker Exploitation

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In early October, the Fair Work Ombudsman released a damning report into the conditions of 417 working holiday visa holders around Australia, highlighting brutal exploitation, criminal underpayment, and an environment of fear and anxiety.

The report comes off the back of a survey of more than 4,000 overseas workers, with more than two thirds reporting that they felt their employer was taking advantage of them. A majority of those surveyed also admitted that they were not willing to speak up about the exploitation, afraid that their employer might punish them by denying them a second-year visa.

It's heartwarming to see the Ombudsman finally recognising the exploitation of 417 visa holders, especially after the years that the AMIEU, the National Union of Workers, and everybody else involved in the agricultural sector have spent sending them evidence proving it exists.

The report even makes note of the positive steps taken by meat processing companies like Baiada and Thomas Foods to improve standards for their workers – steps taken in direct response to years of sustained pressure by the AMIEU and direct video evidence of worker exploitation so overwhelming and horrific that it made the national news.

Fair Work Ombudsman Natalie James now agrees that the evidence clearly points to dodgy labour hire companies who have “set up a business that is reliant on exploitation of workers”, and that “one of the things that troubles us about these labour hire companies is ... we turn up at their registered business address and that's not their registered business address.”

The key question that remains is no longer “does exploitation exist”, but “what are we going to do about it”?

Unfortunately while it's great to see the Ombudsman finally get on board with what everybody has been saying all along, it's clear that they have absolutely no idea how to fix the problem.

The list of Official Recommendations that bookends the report is littered with meaningless wishy-washy language: a “working group” to “examine regulations”, a “review of information sharing”, “exploring opportunities to extend channels”. These vague recommendations will be now be passed on to the Federal Government's Migrant Worker Taskforce for further consideration, three more years will pass, and exploitation will continue unabated because nobody in Government seems willing or capable of addressing the issue at the heart of this abuse: ABN rorting.

This issue isn't something that can be fixed with vague, useless recommendations about awareness raising and working groups: wholesale structural change is needed to rigorously reinforce the rights of workers and to punish companies who abuse them.

A solution is ready and waiting, and it's something we've written to them about many times before: mandatory Tax File Numbers for all visa holders, and joint employment legislation to force companies that engage labour hire agencies to be responsible for the abuse that happens on their farms and in their meat sheds.

Until the Fair Work Ombudsman and the Government are willing to tackle the cancer at the root of this illness, workers around Australia will continue to be exploited and abused. Real political courage – not surveys and working groups – is needed to lead the wholesale changes that will put a stop to this horrific practice.

# BREXIT. HANSOM. TRUMP.



**Graham Smith**  
FEDERAL SECRETARY

## What do all these things have in common?

A revolution is happening. The people of the world are rebelling against the establishment and we are now seeing a pattern of backlash (or in the United States some are coining the unhelpful term 'whitelash') against the current trend of politicians who are choosing to ignore the voice of the people in their own countries in preference to pursuing a neo-liberal globalism ideal.

Neo Liberal Globalism! What the hell is that you might ask?

In its purest sense it is the idea that we put the interests of the entire world above those of individual nations. It is where economic and foreign policy are enacted on a global basis. Its motives are pure, but its impact is a pill that is proving too hard for citizens to swallow. It is, in fact, Big Brother enacted.

The idea of globalism is to have one world approach to everything in order to deal with security of food supplies going into the future and to create a global economy and stability where all people of the world benefit and are brought out of poverty. The EU on 98 Octane.

The problem is, that in order to make this happen the leading economies must surrender their

protections of their industries and open their borders to multinationalism in their countries. What this has led to in practical outcomes is the demise of manufacturing industries in England, America, Australia and around the world.

It has led to free trade agreements that damage or completely remove our industry protections and open border policies that have resulted in an unbelievable wave of exploitation and the driving down of worker's wages, as the rich continue to live in luxury, completely unaffected by this change.

Religious extremism has spanned the globe, and fear of terrorism has created a backdrop of racial vilification.

Throughout all of this the politicians (both sides of the political spectrum in these countries) have become convinced that they know better than the people they represent and that they will lead us into a brave new world no matter what the cost is along the way. And no matter what the voters think of all of this!

Brexit was the start of the reprisal by ordinary people, predominantly workers. Britain's manufacturing industry is in tatters as free trade agreements saw the industries move to countries where cheaper labour could replace that workload.

The immigration issue there is of such large concern that public outcry has been broadcast for

some time. The exploitation of migrant workers has driven wages down and the workforce is struggling to pay their bills.

The effects of globalism policies are now being felt in Australia and in a display of anarchy against the obvious cosy huddle between Liberal and Labor here to align their policies while they both work on the neo-liberal global ideal, the Australian people elected a hung parliament and then a swathe of Senators that some people think are bat-shit crazy.

The American result is not really a surprise.

The people are disconnected to their politicians, that is clear. And there is good reason why that is. The politicians have brought that upon themselves by pushing this global ideal without any apparent concern for the trail of destruction it is wreaking in their own back yard.

The political sphere is so completely broken in the U.S. that during this election a group formed that called themselves 'Republicans for Hilary!' They were so dead against the idea of anarchists upsetting their dream of globalism, that they would sacrifice their own principals and steer their party members towards the 'opposition'.

The Americans seem to have entered Bizarro World where a rich capitalist is espousing traditional socialist ideals of protectionism of industry whilst also promoting the conservative ideal of individualism. This is all very hard to follow but it did give the voters a different perspective to the current Government agenda.

And then of course there was the media. There is only one thing people hate more than politicians who won't listen to them, and that is the damn media trying to dictate the outcomes of elections or how people should think.

The media hide under the public disguise that they are responsible for, and I quote them directly, "helping to shape the thoughts of people". This is of course, misdirection for their real goal of dictating public policy from their media desks in line with the globalisation policies of the politicians, including political correctness.

Politicians around the world need to heed the warnings of their people now because these warnings have heralded Brexit, Hanson and Trump. The revolution is not coming. It is already here!



# WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY

BE ALERT · BE AWARE · BE WELL

## Meat processing

These are the most common injuries to workers in the meat processing industry based on accepted workers' compensation claims

\*The meat processing industry includes organisations mainly engaged in slaughtering animals, boning, freezing, preserving or packing meat, canning meat, manufacturing meats from abattoir by-products or rendering lard or tallow.

### Shoulder

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from handling objects

11%

### Eye

Fragments in eyes from bone dust or contact with chemicals or animal waste

3%

### Elbow

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from repetitive use or handling of knives

4%

### Forearm

Wounds/lacerations from using knives

6%

### Back

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from lifting or carrying objects

13%

### Wrist

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from repetitive use or handling of knives

10%

### Knee

Muscle and tendon sprains and strains from tripping or slipping on unsafe floor surfaces

3%

26%

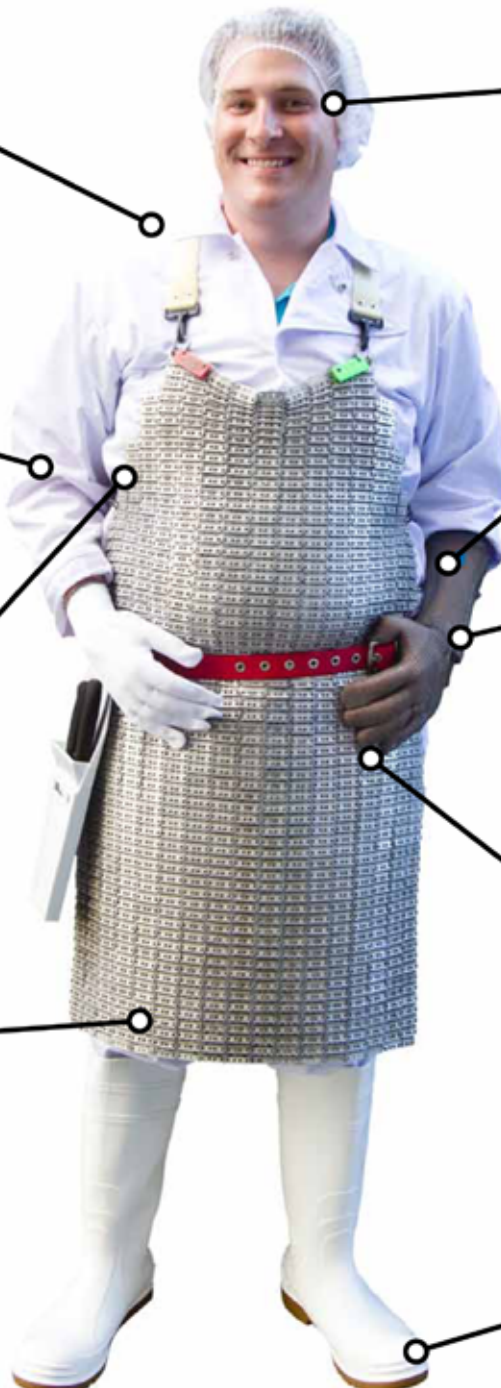
### Hand and fingers

Wounds/lacerations from using knives, bandsaws, hock and brisket cutters

### Foot and toes

Burns from contact with hot water or steam

3%



Source: Queensland Employee Injury Database. Data current as at February 2011 and is subject to change over time. Based on accepted workers' compensation claims, excluding commuting claims, between 2000-01 and 2008-09.



# The Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union

# TOOL CATALOGUE

The AMIEU Newcastle & Northern Branch is a specialist union for all workers in the meat industry.

We supply tools to both our members and non members alike, although our members do get a substantial discount on all products.

We stock over 200 product lines from knives, steels, stones, safety equipment and accessories. Product enquiries are welcome.

We are a non profit organisation and our members pay no mark up for these tools. That's why they are so cheap, we sell at the wholesalers prices.

If you are interested in viewing the catalogue and price list, please visit our website [newcastle.amieu.asn.au](http://newcastle.amieu.asn.au) or contact our Newcastle branch office on:

*(02) 4929 5496*



## QUALITY TOOLS - UNION MEMBER DISCOUNT !







# Summary of benefits & costs

<b>MIESF returns all of its profits to members Higher returns – Lower costs</b>		
<b>Earnings Allocated – MIESF MySuper</b>	2015/16	5.8% p.a. (6.3% p.a. for Pension section)
<b>Historical – MIESF MySuper</b>	5 year average	7.9% p.a. (8.7% p.a. for Pension section)
	10 year average	5.1% p.a. (5.7% p.a. for Pension section)
	20 year average	6.8% p.a. (7.6% p.a. for Pension section)
	33 year average	8.5% p.a. (Pension section started in 1995)
<b>High Growth Option</b>	With effect from 31 January 2009, the Fund offers Main section members an investment choice which is referred to as the “High Growth Option”. The earnings rate allocated for the High Growth Option was 3.0% p.a. for 2015/16. The 5 year average was 10.2% p.a. and the 7 year average was 10.2% p.a.	
<b>Net Assets at 30 June 2016</b>	\$717 million	
<b>Size of Fund as at 30 June 2016</b>	Membership	23,800
	Registered “active” employers	1,975
<b>Management Fees</b>	Administration	\$67.60 p.a. deducted from each account (increasing to \$78 p.a. from 1 January 2017)
	0.53% p.a. of your account balance when it is invested in MIESF MySuper or 0.37% p.a. of your account balance when it is invested in the High Growth Option. These are the Fund's investment related costs. There are no entry fees, however a withdrawal fee of \$35 applies for each withdrawal from the Fund.	
<b>Death, Terminal Illness and Total and Permanent Disablement (TPD) Insurance Cover</b>	Eligible members under age 65 have \$200,000 of death and Terminal Illness insurance cover. Eligible members aged 65 to 69 inclusive have \$35,000 of death insurance cover. Eligible members aged 65 to 68 inclusive have \$35,000 of Terminal Illness insurance cover. Eligible members under age 39 have \$200,000 of TPD insurance cover. The level of cover reduces rapidly from age 39 to age 64 and is \$0 from age 65.	
	<b>93% of MIESF members are insured</b> \$5.60 per week is deducted from each eligible member's account to cover the cost. You can view the Fund's Insurance Booklet dated 22 October 2014 online at <a href="http://miesf.com.au/pds">miesf.com.au/pds</a> . The various cover restrictions are explained on pages 3 and 4 of the Insurance Booklet.	
<b>Pension Section</b>	Members aged 55 or over can start a MIESF Pension with the same low “Management Fees” as set out above.	
<b>Voluntary Contributions</b>	Voluntary member contributions can be made at no extra cost and may qualify for government co-contributions. Please note that if you are aged 65 or over, you will need to be employed on at least a part-time basis to make voluntary member contributions. If you are aged 75 or over, you cannot make these contributions into superannuation.	
<b>Your Industry Fund</b>	MIESF was established over 30 years ago. It operates Australia-wide as a multi employer fund providing superannuation for people working in the meat industry.	

The above is only a summary. Please note that past investment performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance.

Details of the Fund's benefits, costs and operations can be seen in our latest Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) dated 22 October 2015. There is also a PDS for the Pension section members dated 22 October 2015.

You can view these PDSs online at [miesf.com.au/pds](http://miesf.com.au/pds) or, if you would like a printed copy, please call 1800 252 099. You should consider the Fund's Product Disclosure Statements before making a decision to acquire or continue to hold interests in the Fund.

The Trustee of the Fund is Meat Industry Employees' Superannuation Fund Pty Ltd  
(ABN 58 005 793 199) (AFSL 239953) (RSE L0001434) MySuper Authorised 17317520544110



# Very competitive investment returns from MIESF

## Investment Returns

The returns (net of investment costs and tax) allocated to the accounts of members for the year ended **30 June 2016** are:

**5.8%** for Accumulation Members invested in MIESF MySuper

**3.0%** for Accumulation Members invested in the High Growth Option

**6.3%** for Pension Members

The 2015/16 financial year was a difficult period for investors. Returns achieved on Australian and International shares were close to 0%.

**The 5.8% return allocated to members invested in MIESF MySuper is a very competitive return. It is about the third highest return for MySuper accounts in Australian superannuation funds.**

Members will see the impact of these investment returns on their superannuation account by checking their Annual Benefit Statement.

If you did not receive your 2016 Benefit Statement, please telephone the Fund.

Please take a few minutes to review the "Summary of benefits & costs" for MIESF shown on the previous page.

## Superannuation Guarantee Contributions

Compulsory Superannuation Guarantee contributions made by your employer should be 9.5% of your ordinary earnings since 1 July 2014.

## MIESF is Your Industry Fund

MIESF was created in 1981 by the AMIEU. The Fund continues to be supported by the Union. The Trustee company that controls the Fund has an independent chairperson and half of the other directors are nominated by the Union on behalf of members.

The Fund's objective is to offer meat workers a low cost, simple and efficient superannuation fund. The aim of MIESF MySuper is to ensure the security of your retirement money and to provide a reasonable rate of return above bank rates of interest over the medium and long-term without taking undue financial risk. Members who can tolerate a higher degree of risk may invest part or all of their account in the High Growth Option.

## MIESF is MySuper Authorised

The Trustee of MIESF has been authorised by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority to provide MIESF MySuper for its members.

Government legislation requires employers, in many cases, to pay superannuation contributions to a fund that offers a MySuper account. These MySuper accounts are supposed to be a low cost, simple and efficient option for members for their Superannuation Guarantee contributions.

If you have not actively chosen the superannuation fund that your employer pays your contributions to or you have not made an investment choice; your contributions must be paid to a MySuper account.

If you are currently a member of MIESF, your employer should continue to make contributions on your behalf to MIESF.

## MIESF has Low Fees

All MySuper products are supposed to have low fees, a simple investment option and death and total and permanent disablement insurance cover. MIESF MySuper has these characteristics. Over time you should be able to compare MySuper products and you will see that MIESF is one of the lowest cost superannuation funds in Australia.

The Australian Prudential Regulation Authority has published in its "Insight Issue One 2014" details of data collected from the authorised MySuper products. The average total administration and investment fee per annum for a member with a \$50,000 account balance was \$496, within a range of \$215 to \$1,242. By comparison, the equivalent MIESF MySuper fee was \$345 in 2015/16.

## Insurance Arrangements from 1 July 2013

The Fund's self insured Death cover was replaced from 1 July 2013 with an insurance policy. Death, Total and Permanent Disablement (TPD) and Terminal Illness insurance cover is provided to all eligible members.

The \$200,000 Death cover for eligible members under 65 was retained. This benefit is now payable "early" upon Terminal Illness. Eligible members under age 39 now have \$200,000 of TPD insurance cover. The level of TPD cover reduces rapidly from age 39 to age 64 and is \$0 from age 65. The deduction from each eligible member's account was increased from \$5 per week (for the self-insured Death cover) to \$5.60 per week for the new insurance cover.

The death and Terminal Illness insurance cover was extended from 1 July 2014. Eligible members aged 65 to 69 inclusive now have \$35,000 of death insurance cover. Eligible members aged 65 to 68 inclusive also now have \$35,000 of Terminal Illness insurance cover. The \$5.60 per week deduction also applies for this insurance cover.

More details on the insurance cover are available in the Fund's Insurance Booklet dated 22 October 2014 which can be seen online at [miesf.com.au/pds](http://miesf.com.au/pds). The various cover restrictions are explained on pages 3 and 4 of the Insurance Booklet.

**We are pleased that the \$5.60 per week deduction and the current insurance terms will continue to apply at least until 30 June 2018 at a time when many other superannuation funds have increased their insurance costs or made their insurance terms worse for members.**

## How to Contact Us

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