

AMWU

News

Australian Manufacturing Workers Union



AMWU

Autumn 2020

Who killed Holden?

The tragic death of the Australian car industry.

INSIDE

**New deal
wrapped up for
VIP Packaging**

**Bright future for
new apprentices
at Downer
Maryborough**

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workers closing
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Editorial

The end of iconic Australian brand Holden was a sad moment in Australian manufacturing history. We stand in solidarity with the six hundred workers who will lose their jobs as a result of the announcement and will be doing everything we can to support them as they transition out of the industry.

It didn't have to be this way. If Joe Hockey and the Liberals hadn't dared Holden to leave Australia, and if the Liberals had a plan for Australia's manufacturing industry, things could have turned out very differently. You can read more about what went wrong on page four.

The Holden closure contrasts starkly with what's going on up at Downer EDI rail workshop in Maryborough. The Our Trains Our Jobs campaign and the tireless work of AMWU members in Queensland has delivered a \$300 million State Government contract with a ten-year pipeline of work. This certainty has enabled Downer EDI to bring on 13 new apprentices. That's a huge win for manufacturing, skills, and jobs in Queensland, and it shows what a difference a government that believes in manufacturing can make. Check out page nine for the full story.

Our members in the printing and packaging industry have been busy notching up wins all around the country. Visy workers at Canning Vale in Western Australia joined the AMWU and got their first ever Enterprise Agreement. Thirty Orora workers at Scorseby have become trade certified after the union supported their push for apprenticeships. And VIP Packaging workers at Truganina stood strong through more than a month of round-the-clock action to secure a new four-year agreement that locks in good conditions and fair pay rises. You can read all about those wins inside.

Workers at Thales Garden Island also won a new Enterprise Agreement with fair pay rises that didn't trade-off any of their existing conditions after hitting the grass together, while Prixcar workers won a new agreement that will review workplace classifications.

As AMWU members know, classifications are crucial to recognise skills and ensure appropriate pay.

In this issue you'll also find a feature on Health and Safety. The latest Workers' Compensation statistics show that manufacturing is the second most dangerous industry in Australia. Safety is union business, and we know that workers in unionised sites are less likely to be injured at work. You can find out more about how to make your workplace safer by reading the article on page eight. Remember – if you don't have an elected, union-trained Health and Safety Representative in your workplace, talk to your delegate or organiser about getting one as soon as possible. Health and Safety Representatives have a lot of power under national WHS laws and they're an important part of our union.

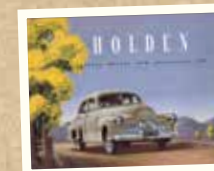
Last of all, I'd like to pay my respects to comrade Dave Goodger who passed away earlier this year. Dave was a long-standing AMWU member who went on to lead our union as an organiser, State Secretary and National President. Dave was a comrade, mentor, and friend to me and to many in the AMWU. He will be greatly missed, and on behalf of the union my condolences go to his partner Barbara, his family, and his friends. Rest in Power Dave.

In unity

Paul Bastian
AMWU National Secretary



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PROUDLY PRINTED BY AMWU MEMBERS AT MCPHERSON'S PRINTING PTY LTD

AMWU News Autumn 2020

AMWU News is the official publication of the Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, (registered AFMEPKIU) National Office, 133 Parramatta Road, Granville, NSW, 2142. Editor: Paul Bastian
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All information included in this publication was correct at the time of publication, but is subject to change at any time. Please contact your union organiser for updates.
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Who killed Holden?

It was the announcement which shocked a nation.

In February, global car giant General Motors announced it would be ceasing production of Holden vehicles.

The Holden brand would be 'retired'. Holden dealerships across the country would be closed, and around 600 Australian workers will lose their jobs.

Almost immediately, so-called experts came forward to explain what went wrong with Holden.

Free trade agreements made the cost of imported cars cheaper, they said. Australians stopped buying large sedans like Commodores and started buying smaller cars and four-wheel drives. The global market for right-hand drive cars is too small to justify maintaining a niche brand like Holden.

Without doubt, all of these factors played a part.

But Holden wasn't just a normal business. It was a significant player in our national economy. As late as 2015-16, the automotive industry still contributed \$37.1 billion - or 2.2 per cent - of Australia's GDP.

The Holden brand also had iconic status in the national identity. Australia was Kingswood country. We were the country of meat pies, kangaroos and Holdens.

So as we close the book on Holden, it's vital that we work out how car manufacturing in this country was allowed to wither and die.

Who really killed Holden?

The Hockey Ultimatum

One-liners are the currency of political debate, and the House of Representatives in Canberra has seen plenty of them over the years.

But on December 11 2013, a one-liner from the then Treasurer Joe Hockey set off a shockwave that brought Australia's car manufacturing industry to its knees.

Tanya Plibersek had just asked a question about securing the future of Holden's car manufacturing activities in Australia, but Hockey wasn't having a bar of it.

"If I was running a business in Australia, I wouldn't be saying that I hadn't made any decision about its future," Hockey roared.

“Either you’re here, or you’re not.”

His words hung in the air as he sat back down on the plush government benches.

In the stunned silence, it became clear that this was the beginning of the end for Holden.

The Federal Treasurer was using Parliament to goad them into leaving the country.

From here there would be no more negotiations.

The reality of the Federal Government position was reinforced just a week later, when the then Prime Minister Tony Abbott said that Holden workers who lost their jobs would “probably be liberated to pursue new opportunities and to get on with their lives.”

Not many of the workers who lost their jobs, however, felt “liberated”. Most felt angry, sad, and let down.

National Tragedy

Assistant National Secretary (Vehicle Membership) Dave Smith doesn't mince his words when he looks back at the demise of car manufacturing in Australia.

"In just seven years of Liberal Government mismanagement, Holden has gone from directly employing over 3,500 workers in manufacturing, design, and engineering to employing a skeleton staff of approximately two hundred," Dave said.

"At Toyota, 2,700 jobs have gone, while at Ford another 600 have disappeared.

So as we close the book on Holden, it's vital that we work out how car manufacturing in this country was allowed to wither and die.

Who really killed Holden?

"Since the Abbott Liberal Government was elected in 2013, over 6,800 directly employed auto industry workers have lost their jobs - and that doesn't factor in job losses throughout the supply chain.

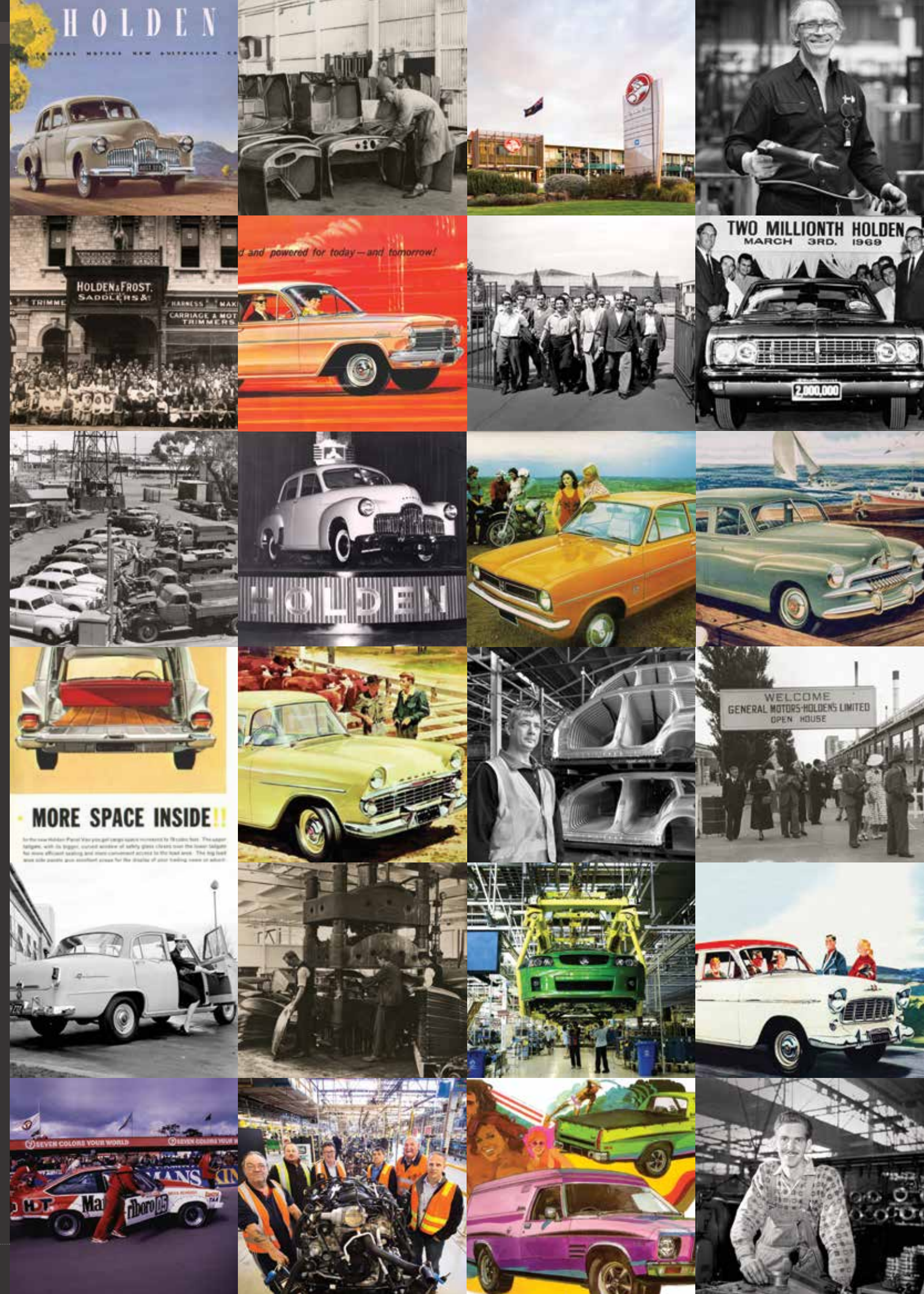
"The loss of our car manufacturing industry is a national tragedy, and one that could easily have been avoided if we had a Government with a vision for Australian jobs and Australian industry."

Dave Smith said that despite the death of the car industry, Australia has the skills and capacity to be a world-leading advanced manufacturing nation.

“We can build ships, submarines, trains and trams here,” Dave said.

"We can expand our food manufacturing industry and get in on the lithium battery boom."

“But we need a Government with a strategy that can invest in industry where it’s needed to create the jobs for the future.” ●



Unity pays off for 'force behind the force'

Persistence and unity have paid off for Thales workers at Sydney's Garden Island naval base, after reaching agreement for a nine per cent pay rise over three years.

The in-principle agreement (which at the time of writing was still being finalised before being put to members for a vote) secured the pay rise without requiring members to sacrifice any of their hard-fought conditions. Delegate Chris Mooney said members were determined to get a decent pay rise out of their new Enterprise Agreement. "Pay was definitely the most important item on our list of claims," Chris said. "Members made it clear that they would not accept less than three per cent a year, and they refused to budge until we got it locked in." Although it has only been a year since the previous Enterprise



Thales Garden Island workers stood together and won fair pay rises.

Agreement, Chris said it was a relatively long negotiation - drawn out over 16 meetings. The turning point, however, came after members decided to take protected industrial action. "We'd reached a stalemate, so members showed management that we were united in our determination, initially with a two-hour stoppage. "When this did not move their offer, we applied an overtime ban and flagged a potential three-day work stoppage," Chris said.

"The stoppage would have had the effect of preventing the ship in our dock from undocking. Once Thales management realised that members weren't going to back down, we were able to have a serious discussion about pay."

"Initially Thales wanted to trade the pay rise for some additional claims, but we pushed back on most of these. Eventually we were able to reach an in-principle agreement that kept our existing conditions and delivered a decent outcome on wages." Members had already secured ten days family and domestic violence leave through the previous agreement. This provision flowed through to the National Thales Framework Agreement - meaning that it not only benefits workers at Garden Island, it's available to 3,600 Thales workers across

the country. NSW Assistant State Secretary Robyn Fortescue said the agreement also included important provisions around dispute resolution processes which strengthen workers' rights. "If there's an argument over an issue such as shift hours, for example, then Thales will have to stick with the status quo while it goes through the dispute process," Robyn said. "There will also be a working party formed to look into rostering patterns - but no changes can be made without the agreement of the affected workers." The deal required a high degree of cooperation and solidarity between the different unions represented on the site - including the Electrical Trades Union, United Workers Union and Professionals Australia, as well as the AMWU. Robyn Fortescue said the Garden Island site had a strong industrial history, where workers were renowned for standing shoulder-to-shoulder and looking after each other. "These workers are the force behind the force, maintaining the ships that keep us safe," Robyn said. ●

Prixcar workers take pole position

Workers at national automotive logistics firm PrixCar could be moving higher up the grid into better paid positions as a result of their new Enterprise Agreement.

The three-year deal secures a decent annual pay increase, locks in existing conditions, and also delivers a review of workplace classifications.

Queensland Assistant State Secretary (Vehicle Membership Area) Bill Thanas said PrixCar workers had already benefitted from union-negotiated pay and conditions for a number of years.

"An important outcome from this Agreement is that it redefines job classifications," Bill said.

"The new classifications will clearly define where people should be sitting at, and this should result in some workers being moved up to a higher grade.

"Another big win was around more clarity regarding the conversion of casual workers to permanent.



Workers at Prixcar have negotiated a new Enterprise Agreement

"We will work hard to get our members who have been long term casuals converted over to secure employment."

Australia's Pit Crew

If you've bought a new car at some stage over the past 30 years, there's a strong chance that workers from PrixCar have detailed it, fitted accessories to it, stored it, or moved it.

The company works with manufacturers such as Audi, BMW, Fiat, Hino, Holden, Jeep, Mini, Nissan, Renault, Skoda, Mercedes Benz, VW, Volvo and others.

PrixCar also has a national footprint, with 15 depots in all Australian states and territories.

Having workplaces spread out across the whole country presents challenges when it comes to engaging members through Enterprise Bargaining and making sure everyone is kept up-to-date.

"The workplace delegates really led the way in the negotiations, and in communicating with their colleagues on the shop floor," said Bill.

Better Communication

Bill Thanas says the new Enterprise Agreement should also pave the way for better communication between workers and PrixCar management, with the formation of a new charter for a consultative committee to discuss workplace issues.

"From now on, management will meet with union delegates to talk with them about issues such as career progression, development opportunities and wage level progression." ●

NEW DEAL WRAPPED UP FOR VIP PACKAGING

It took a month of rolling industrial action to get there, but workers at VIP Packaging in Truganina, north-east of Melbourne, have wrapped up a new agreement with important gains on pay and conditions.

Workers held tight and maintained a picket outside the site, and finally succeeded in getting management back to the table.

Organiser Alistair Thomas said there are around 40 members at the site, and everyone played a part in achieving the new agreement.

"The industrial action was planned very strategically," Alistair said. "Nothing could move, nothing could be made."

"The picket was also maintained 24/7 with a with three shifts of eight hours, seven days a week."

The end result was a deal that delivered:

- An annual 3.5 per cent wage increase over the four years

- Six days paid delegate leave a year
- A shutdown period over the June school holidays
- A classification review, which is to be completed by the end of March
- Clauses for casuals, such as overtime, shutdown and hours of work
- Accident make-up pay, with 52 weeks cap based on pre-injury average weekly earnings (PIAWE)
- An afternoon shift loading of 50% after midnight
- Hours of work only Monday to Thursday, and can only be changed by consultation and agreement of the shift
- Paid quarterly union meetings.



"They've got ten days of sick leave at 9.5 hours per day, or 95 hours for the year, which they've never had before," Alistair added.

"The classifications have all been done, so pretty much everyone will go up another level. That's a pay rise on top of a pay rise."

Alistair paid tribute to the workers and their delegates for the determined and professional way they handled the negotiation.

"Members kept standing strong, right from the beginning to the end, and the delegates did an amazing job," he said.

"They've been fighting for these conditions for the past 10 to 15 years, so it's a really great result." ●

On the January 18 this year, the AMWU lost one of our long serving comrades, Dave Goodger.

Dave joined the AEU, one of the unions that amalgamated to create the AMWU, in 1956 at the age of 16 as an apprentice at the Eveleigh rail yards.

Dave then worked at the Colgate-Palmolive factory, where in 1965 he became a workplace delegate. Dave also went on to hold a number of other positions including State Conference delegate, National Conference delegate, and a delegate to the Metal Trades Federation of Unions, before becoming a NSW State Organiser in 1975. He was then elected to the office of NSW Assistant Secretary in 1985, State Secretary in 1986, and National President from 1996-2000.

His comrade Bruce Campbell, former delegate and State Organiser described him as "a radical who wouldn't take a backward step on the job, a good thinker and a good strategist". It was this combination of determination and strategic thinking that helped deliver the 35-hour week.

Bruce remembers that while Laurie Carmichael was driving the 35 hour week campaign nationally, "Fox Manufacturing in Sydney were the troops on the ground. We went out on strike for 10 or 11 weeks, and Dave was the one who drove it in the local area. He'd be down at the meetings all the time explaining why we needed the 35-hour week,



In his retirement, Dave enjoyed spending time in his shed and on his boat. He will be missed.

reassuring the workers, and organising meetings with other workers in other shops to get the financial assistance to sustain the dispute."

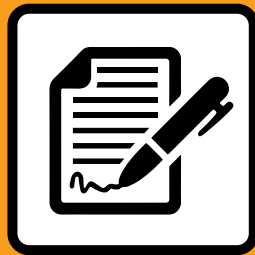
"He was a determined and capable bloke", Bruce said. "Very articulate, and very astute. The campaign for a 35-hour week would have gone nowhere without dedicated people like Dave and Laurie."

Brian Beer, who served as NSW State President while Dave was State Secretary, described him as "a very good leader with a great sense of humour" who was dedicated to the members and the movement.

AMWU National Secretary Paul Bastian said "Dave was instrumental in many of the major campaigns and disputes of the 70s, 80s, and 90s, including shorter hours, superannuation and equal pay to name just a few. He played a leadership role at both the state and national levels, and we are grateful for his contribution to winning many of the conditions we take for granted today. I am lucky that I could count Dave as a mentor, comrade, and friend. He was a committed unionist to the end and he will be sorely missed. On behalf of the AMWU I'd like to thank him for his service to our movement and offer our condolences to his family and friends." ●

Manufacturing rated as second most dangerous industry

The broader manufacturing sector is the second most dangerous industry for Australian workers, according to the latest statistics on workers' compensation claims.



Manufacturing workers made 8.1 workers' compensation claims for serious injury for every one million hours worked in the 2017-18 financial year. The only industry with a worse record was agriculture (forestry and fishing) which recorded 8.6 claims for every one million hours worked.

AMWU National Work Health and Safety Officer Dave Henry said these figures, which are startling enough, underestimate the true picture of workplace injuries.

"There are many, many workplace injuries where either the claim is denied by the insurer or workers are just too fearful to put in a workers' compensation claim," Dave said.

The statistics show that no-one should take workplace safety for granted. You wonder why we are still facing such significant safety issues in our workplaces in the 21st century.

Dave Henry believes there are a number of factors behind the high number of injuries in the manufacturing sector, but the primary reason is that too many employers do not take their health and safety obligations seriously.

"The relaxed attitudes of some employers are in part, driven by lacklustre safety regulators around the country," Dave said.

"To put it simply, if employers don't believe that they're likely to be prosecuted, then it's not a focus of their attention."

Dave Henry also highlighted the lack of power that workers have in the current industrial environment.

"Too often we see that workers are hesitant to exercise their legal rights in the workplace because they're concerned about retribution from their employer.

"There's also the problem of insecure employment, because workers can be more reluctant to raise safety issues if they don't have a secure job.

"In an environment where the regulator doesn't do its job, the problems faced by these workers are amplified."

These factors make the role of Workplace Health and Safety Representatives (or HSRs) even more important. Dave Henry explains that HSRs not only have to be in place in all of our workplaces, they also have to be well-supported.

"HSRs play a crucial role in representing workers in workplaces and holding the boss to account, but we've also got to be mindful that the effectiveness of Health and Safety Representatives comes down to the training they get," he said.

"We know that union trained Health and Safety Representatives are always going to be more effective than Health and Safety Representatives trained by the bosses' contractor."

Dave Henry said HSRs come armed with serious statutory powers that go beyond anything available to union delegates.

"For example, HSRs have a right to issue a Provisional Improvement Notice. If the boss doesn't comply with that Provisional Improvement Notice then there are penalties of up to a quarter of a million dollars for each offence.

"My advice to workers who haven't got a union-trained HSR in their workplace is to get one. If they don't know how to go about doing that, then get in contact with the AMWU." ●

The Australian Workers' Compensation Statistics 2017-18 report was released in January, and its key findings included:

- *There were a total of 107,335 serious workers' compensation claims in the 2017-18 financial year*
- *Labourers, community and personal service workers, and machinery operators and drivers were the three occupations with the highest rate of serious claims (per million hours worked)*
- *The three industries with the highest rate of serious claims (per million hours worked) were agriculture, (forestry and fishing), manufacturing and transport, postal and warehousing*
- *Body stressing caused 36 per cent of serious claims while falls, trips and slips caused 23 per cent of serious claims.*

Canning Vale Visy workers closing the gap

Workers at Visy Board in Canning Vale, Western Australia, have negotiated a landmark Enterprise Agreement that will put them on a path to higher pay and better conditions.



Visy workers at Canning Vale in WA have just negotiated their first Enterprise Agreement.

The site has been left off the map for years, but with its out-dated and inferior

Enterprise Agreement expiring, workers decided it was time to act collectively and to seek assistance from the AMWU.

Organiser Vince Fryer said workers at the Canning Vale facility realised that they were getting a dud deal compared to workers in other sites.

"Workers were clearly frustrated that their terms and conditions had fallen so far behind those of workers in other sites covered by a multi-site Visy Agreement which conveniently excluded workers at the Canning Vale site," Vince said.

delegate, and they nominated the AMWU to represent them in the bargaining negotiations.

"Suddenly they were organised and had some leverage."

Vince Fryer said there was still a long way to go to bring the pay and conditions of Canning Vale workers up to the same level as other unionised Visy workers who have

"There was one major difference between workers at Canning Vale and workers on the National Agreement, and that was the fact that workers at Canning Vale had not unionised.

"Almost all of the staff at Canning Vale decided to join the union, they elected a site

delegate, and they nominated the AMWU to represent them in the bargaining negotiations.

"Suddenly they were organised and had some leverage."

Vince Fryer said there was still a long way to go to bring the pay and conditions of Canning Vale workers up to the same level as other unionised Visy workers who have

been negotiating union agreements for years - but this new Enterprise Agreement was a big step forward.

"The first Agreement is always a stepping stone," Vince said.

"The Agreement delivers a better pay rise than what these guys had previously been getting.

"We were also able to negotiate some important changes to the workplace policies. For example, delegates will now be able to access training - something they didn't have before."

Vince said the challenge going forward would be to maintain solidarity and to continue pushing for more improvements to working conditions.

"Ultimately it would be great to get workers at Canning Vale onto the national multi-site Visy Agreement.

"In the meantime, we'll keep pushing for improvements, and continue to close the gap." ●

Future bright for new apprentices at Maryborough railway workshops

A career in advanced manufacturing beckons for 13 new apprentices who have started work in Queensland's famous Maryborough railway workshops.

The apprenticeships are another show of confidence in the workshops, which were facing closure in 2015.

Today the EDI Downer workshops employ 250 people, and they are ramping up to deliver on a \$300 million, ten-year pipeline of work.

The Queensland State Government has committed to a series of major projects including the overhaul of electric and diesel Tilt Trains, and the IMU160 and SMU260 fleet - all of which will be done at Maryborough.

The site has been in operation for 150 years, and built its first locomotive in 1896, but the past few decades have been full of ups and downs.

For local workers like delegate Peter Killeen, seeing a group of eager young workers



Thirteen new apprentices have started work at Downer EDI in Maryborough, Queensland.

taking to the tools is a clear sign that things have changed for the better.

"For a few years there we didn't put on any apprentices at all, but this is one of the largest intakes of new apprentices in recent times at Maryborough," Peter said.

"Young people can see that manufacturing's back, and this is an industry where they can make a long-term career.

"Having the next generation of tradespeople learning these skills is great for the business, great for regional Queensland, and great for the future of our site."

Queensland State Secretary Rohan Webb said the employment of the new apprentices was a positive way to start the new year.

"AMWU members and their delegates put their heart and soul into the campaign to save Maryborough, and to give this place a future.

"We all know that Australia has a world-class rail manufacturing industry, but the fact is that State Governments need to support it.

"That's what we've seen in Queensland - the Palaszczuk Government was prepared to work constructively with unions and industry to deliver high-skilled, long-term jobs.

"As a result, Maryborough is back firing on all cylinders, and the future is looking bright for 13 young apprentices." ●

The struggle for justice under President Duterte



Defending workers' rights and fighting against exploitation in the Philippines is downright dangerous.

Trade unions have been brutally repressed since President Rodrigo Duterte came to power in 2016.

In fact, 46 trade unionists have been killed in extra-judicial killings under the Duterte regime. A further 27,000 civilians have been killed in the name of the President's notorious 'war on drugs'.

Unionists are routinely harassed, threatened and slandered under a practice known as 'red-tagging', where unionists are either forced to defend themselves against fabricated legal charges, or accused of having 'links' to banned communist or terrorist organisations.

This is all happening on our regional doorstep. What's more, the Australian Government is providing military training and support to the dictatorial Duterte regime under the so-called Enhanced Military Cooperation Program.

This program is meant to help the Philippines combat terrorism, but the Duterte regime has repeatedly used 'counter-terrorism' operations to justify raiding the homes and workplaces of trade union members, human rights defenders, and environmental activists.

Solidarity with the KMU

The AMWU has a close relationship with Kilusang Mayo Uno (KMU) in the Philippines, a trade union that represents over 115,000 workers across all industries.

KMU President Elmer 'Bong' Labog was in Australia during February to meet with Australian politicians and trade unionists.



Mr Labog told AMWU News that Filipino unionists are facing a precarious situation but were continuing to push for basic reforms to improve the lives of working people.

"We are struggling for a 750 peso increase of the national minimum wage," Mr Labog said.

"The amount workers get paid differs from one region to another. The highest wage level we have is in metro Manila, with an equivalent of 15 Australian dollars a day. But if you're in the country then that's much lower than wages of workers in the capital."

But campaigning for workers' rights requires enormous courage in the Philippines.

Free Maojo Maga

One trade unionist who's felt the wrath of Duterte's war on workers is KMU Organiser Maojo Maga.

Maojo Maga was helping to organise the Philippines' 600,000 jeepney drivers, whose jobs will be lost under Government plans to phase out the vehicles from Filipino roads.

Clockwise from top: The KMU delegation, AMWU National Assistant Secretary Glenn Thompson, Tom Reddington from APHEDA, and Peter Murphy from PAUL with Josh Burns MP, Josh Wilson MP, Senator Kim Carr, Senator Tony Sheldon, Peter Khalil MP, and Pat Conroy MP.

Bottom: Elmer Labog and Meryl Quero-Asa outside Parliament House

The phase-out will pave the way for a corporate take-over of the country's public transport system. In 2017 jeepney drivers held a series of strikes to protest against the Government policy. The police response was ruthless targeting a number of people suspected of being involved in the strikes.

Maojo Maga was arrested on bogus charges of possessing firearms and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

"He's the first trade unionist and organiser to have been convicted, and we are very concerned about his situation," Mr Labog said.

Maojo Maga has now been in jail for over two years, but Mr Labog said Australians, and the Australian Government, could help by pressuring the Duterte Government to release political prisoners and end the attacks on political freedom.

"We are calling our friends around the world to extend their solidarity and support our fight for the freedom of Maojo Maga as well as other trade union detainees who are still languishing in Filipino jails," he said. ●

BOOK REVIEW

Super-power: Australia's low-carbon opportunity

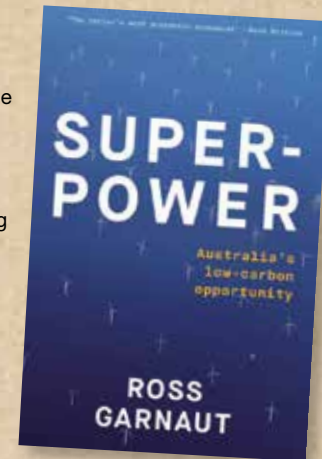
Ross Garnaut's recent book, **"Super-power: Australia's low-carbon opportunity"** is a hopeful outline of a potential industrial future for Australia.

The first fifty pages are quite dense, diving into economic concepts like utility value and discount rates in describing the costs of action or inaction on emissions reduction. This is worth reading, because it does provide a comprehensive understanding of the economic considerations and modelling at play, but the book really hits its stride when Garnaut starts outlining the opportunities for Australia in a low-carbon economy.

Garnaut points out that Australian manufacturing benefited from very low energy costs up until 2006, when electricity providers were privatised and coal and gas that was once reserved for domestic power generation began to be exported.

Manufacturing is an energy intensive industry, and according to Garnaut, if Australia invests in renewable energy that can provide cheap power, we can once again exploit a power price advantage to become a global hub for the processing of mineral ores and associated manufacturing.

The revival of manufacturing in the regions that Garnaut describes would create the kind of high wage, high skill jobs that currently exist in the coal sector. He makes a compelling argument for the viability and international competitiveness of these industries in Australia, if we have government support for renewable energy transmission networks and policy settings



that provide certainty for private investors.

Climate change is real and it is happening. We must take action to ensure we have a habitable planet in the future; but that action must place workers front and centre, ensuring that high wage, secure jobs do not disappear. Garnaut's book provides a vision for a re-industrialised Australia with abundant manufacturing jobs, powered by our global advantage in access to cheap renewable energy. It is a powerful antidote to the claims that action on climate change will destroy jobs.

We have 20 copies of "Super-power: Australia's low-carbon opportunity" to give away. Just write in to communications@amwu.org.au with your name and member number for your chance to win. ●

IN BRIEF

Cadbury sick leave saga takes another twist

The never-ending saga about sick leave rights for shift workers has taken yet another twist, with Federal Attorney General Christian Porter signalling he could use legislation to reduce sick leave entitlements for workers.

In a landmark legal case last year, the Full Court of the Federal Court confirmed that workers have access to ten days of sick leave a year, meaning that workers who do 12-hour shifts every day should have access to 120 hours of sick leave.

The court case revolved around the sick leave entitlements of two AMWU members at Cadbury in Tasmania - Brendan McCormack and Natasha Tewson.

Multi-national food giant Mondelez and the Federal Government,

however, are appealing this decision in the High Court. The Federal Government wants to restrict the minimum entitlements of sick leave for all workers under the Fair Work Act to just 76 hours.

In February, Mr Porter said his office was looking at "contingencies" in case it loses the High Court appeal, including changes to the Fair Work Act. National Secretary Paul Bastian said workers - and the courts - deserved more respect from the

Federal Government.

"Christian Porter has made it clear that he has no intention of abiding by the umpire's decision.

"The AMWU will continue fighting to ensure that workers' rights under the law are protected and upheld." ●



ORORA WORKERS SKILL UP

Thirty workers at packaging company Orora's Scoresby box plant in Victoria have sharpened their skills and graduated as trade qualified printing machinists.

Assistant National Secretary Print and Packaging Lorraine Cassin said the qualifications would have long-term benefits for the workers and the business.

"There is no formal requirement for workers to have a trade qualification to run the equipment, even though the equipment is very expensive and highly technical.

"The AMWU believes this part of the industry should be trade qualified, so we sat down and talked to Orora about the benefits of the existing employees doing an apprenticeship.

It's not just young workers who have received their qualification. Lorraine said there was a wide range of people that undertook the training.

"Older employees who had been there for quite some time wanted the formal recognition of their skills, while younger people wanted to have that



certification for the future," Lorraine said.

Lorraine said the AMWU would continue to talk to employers in the printing sector about the need for more investment in skills development.

"In countries like New Zealand, it's recognised that running a printing machine is a trade, and employers have to take on apprentices. That means workers can attain trade qualifications, and the extra pay that comes with them.

"Trade qualified printing machinists don't just understand some parts of the trade, they get to understand the full complement of what's required in printing and packaging.

"And ultimately that's great for both workers and businesses." ●

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DELEGATE PROFILE

Barry De Pledge

After a four-year apprenticeship and 36 years as a roadside mechanic, Barry De Pledge has pretty much seen it all on South Australian roads.

That includes the time some motorists accidentally locked their keys in the boot and then had to endure a nerve-racking hour-long wait before Barry could get there to help.

"They had an appointment to get to and they were tearing strips off me for taking so long," Barry recalls.

"As they were ranting and raving I just leant in and pulled the boot release on the floor."

The embarrassed couple quickly became very apologetic.

This roadside angel, however, doesn't just go out of his way to help local motorists, he's also a long-standing AMWU delegate, dedicated to helping his workmates get fair pay and decent working conditions.

In fact, Barry sees a lot of similarities between his role with RAA and his role with the AMWU.

"The sense of representing workers is the same as representing motorists," he says. "And that's part of the reason I became a delegate."

Barry grew up in the aptly-named Adelaide suburb of Paradise. His neighbours played an important role in steering him towards a career with RAA which began with an apprenticeship in 1980.

It took a while for Barry to fully understand what trade unionism was all about, but by the mid-80s he started to see why membership mattered.

"I could see that the collective was the place to be as it gave a balance of power between what the bosses wanted and what the workers needed," he says.

"Back then the executives had air conditioners in their own vehicles, but we didn't have them in ours, even though we would spend eight to ten hours a day on the road.



"So we had to campaign to get air conditioning in our work vehicles."

In 1995 Barry became a delegate, and now he's playing a key role as a lead delegate in the negotiations for a new Enterprise Agreement for the 60-odd patrollers at RAA.

At the time of writing, negotiations had stalled, with RAA management seeking to slash patrollers' working conditions.

"The last pay-rise in July 2018 for patrols and workers covered under the Enterprise Agreement was 2 per cent," Barry said.

"Patrol workers are out there helping South Australian motorists 365 days a year. We work with integrity, we're there when motorists need us, and RAA members trust us," Barry said.

"RAA's profit levels are up but they are not recognising that that comes in large part because of the hard work and dedication of workers, like the patrol group."

You can show your support for these skilled and dedicated workers by emailing RAA management and asking them to give workers a fair go - just go this website:

<https://amwunational.good.do/raaworkers/> ●



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