



QUEENSLAND BRANCH NEWS

NEWSLETTER of the QLD Branch of the MARITIME UNION of AUSTRALIA

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To be truly radical is to make hope possible, rather than despair convincing - Raymond Williams No. 172 - 15 March 2019

Branch Secretary's Report - Wharfies Vote to Launch Rolling Industrial Action Two Accidental Conspiracies - Another Workplace Death - Mental Health - BHP Runaway Train Crash Delegates Training - Are We Killing Bali? - Book Review - Cartoon Corner

Branch Secretary's Report

THIS LAST WEEK has seen the Branch heads down and bottoms up in our pursuit of gaining decent employment for Australian Merchant Seafarers.

Next week we are travelling to Gladstone and Cairns where rank and file representatives and myself along with National Secretary, Paddy Crumlin will appear before the Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry into Intra-State Shipping.

We have put an enormous amount of time and resources into this inquiry and are hopeful for a fair outcome.

The DP World Protected Action Ballot was a huge success with an 80%+ vote and an amazing 99.3% vote in favour of action.

Deputy Branch Secretary, Jason Miners has been working closely with the DP World Delegates and Committee. Both Jason and myself will be heavily involved in supporting members through this period until we get a decent and fair agreement for DP World members.

I was in the Fair Work Commission this week dealing with Sea Swift matters, this time around what constitutes a cargo handling allowance.

Other areas of Branch involvement have been Assistant Branch Secretary, Paul Gallagher in his work up north and making headway in the diving industry.

Assistant Secretary, Paul Petersen has been working hard in trying to keep an aggressive management at Hutchison's to toe the line.

Special thanks to members and delegates who are holding the line. Paul has also been heavily involved in Deebing Creek and today's climate change demonstration.

The Branch also would like to thank Adam Tayler from Turner Freeman Lawyers, our personal injury firm who went beyond and above in reaching a decent settlement for a member this week.

May Day will be with us soon and we are working on a good quality Australian Union made t-shirt. We hope for a great turnout from all.

Wharfies Vote to Launch Rolling Industrial Action at Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane And Fremantle Container Terminals

WORKERS AT CONTAINER terminals run by Australia's largest stevedore have voted overwhelming in support of taking rolling industrial action, including strikes and indefinite work bans, with actions to commence from next Friday.

The strike vote follows a threat by DP World Australia management last month to strip workers of income protection insurance unless they accepted the company's demands for a new workplace agreement covering pay and conditions.

The bans and strike action, which can now legally occur from next Friday, include bans on upgrades, bans on overtime and shift extensions, and a series of rolling work stoppages of between 1 and 24 hours.

Maritime Union of Australia National Secretary Paddy Crumlin described the ballot result as an overwhelming rejection of management's attempts to bully and intimidate the workforce.

"This ballot has sent an overwhelming message to management at DP World Australia: we will not be intimidated, we will not roll over and accept your unfair agreement, and we are willing to take every step possible to fight for a fair outcome," Mr Crumlin said.

Mr Crumlin said "workers were determined to ensure they received a fair reward for delivering huge profits to the company.

DP World Australia has seen these profits off the back of huge increases in workforce productivity and it's time for the company to not only give something back but also change course on their attack on workers Income Protection."

MUA Assistant National Secretary Warren Smith said the union had notified of the implementation of indefinite work bans, which will take effect from next Friday. If no resolution is reached, rolling strike action at all four major container terminals will commence in the coming weeks.

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

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“This ballot has overwhelmingly endorsed wide-ranging industrial action. Workers are extremely angry at DPW for the attack on Income Protection and are prepared to use that action to achieve some justice.” he said.



MUA Assistant National Secretary Warren Smith said workers are “extremely angry at DPW” for a plan to cancel a union-backed income protection scheme. Picture: Glenn Hunt/The Australian

“Management attempted to use the wellbeing of workers and their families as a bargaining tool, and our members are determined to send the strongest message possible that we will never back down to corporate bullying and intimidation.”

“Wharfies wages were restrained in the last round of negotiations and it led to huge profits for DP World. Yet instead of rewarding those efforts by sharing some of these profits, this global multi national has resorted to threats, and wharfies don’t like threats.”

Two Accidental Conspiracies: Interest Rates Up. Interest Rates Down. Either Way, Workers Lose. How So? by Janet Burstall

Conspiracy one: NAIRU

When interest rates were higher around 10 years ago, so was unemployment. The Reserve Bank of Australia set interest rates high in order to hold down employment. Low inflation was the RBA’s number one target, and when workers feel insecure about employment they’ll accept lower pay, and prices don’t need to go up as much to cover labour costs. This is not a conspiracy theory, it’s the idea of the Non-Accelerating Inflation Rate of Unemployment.

Higher interest rates work to hold down employment like this: when interest rates are higher, employers borrow less, and employ fewer workers, and it’s harder to get a job. Unemployment has fallen to around 5% currently (but a lot more people, around 14% of people who have work, say they need more hours of work, maybe partly because of the HEM conspiracy, further down in this article) from around 11% in 1992-93. Now that both inflation and unemployment are lower, and wages are still not growing, the Governor of the RBA says (in December 2018) that “some further lift in wages growth” would be good for the economy. But no one in politics or the RBA is willing to say that we need stronger unions to get wages growth.

The RBA has not raised, only lowered interest rates since 2009.

Conspiracy two: HEM

Low interest rates sound good if you’re buying a home. You can afford to pay a higher price to get a better home, and you can pay off your loan faster. However, when you can afford to pay more, so can everyone else, so prices go up. In fact [Reserve Bank of Australia researchers](#) recently showed that “low interest rates explain much of the rapid growth in housing prices”. Housing affordability has actually been getting worse since the 1990s, with house prices rising much faster than incomes even while interest rates were higher.



[Graph from <https://www.businessinsider.com.au/chart-australian-wages-house-prices-2018-3>]

So why did house prices rise for so long, even when interest rates were high? The short answer is HEM, the Household Expenditure Measure. It’s a formula that most banks have been using since around 2000 for deciding how much to lend to households. It’s based on a theory used by banks since the 1990s that households will make other sacrifices in order to keep paying their home loans, they’ll take more work and cut expenses to the bone. It’s called Ability to Pay theory.

For the HEM, home lenders worked out what a minimum standard of living for borrowers would cost, based on the Henderson Poverty Line. Then they work out a home loan repayment that will use up all the rest of the household’s income. ASIC is prosecuting Westpac Bank for their extreme version of HEM. In fact it was so dangerous for financial system stability, to have so many households at risk of being unable to repay excessive home loans, that APRA and ASIC since around 2017 got the banks to improve their “responsible lending” practices. Banks are supposed to find out about actual living costs above the poverty line, and allow for buffers, e.g. in case of interest rate rises. If you look up HEM and the Financial Service Royal Commission, it’s all documented there, including banks promising to make the HEM more realistic.

So either way workers can’t win. RBA’s NAIRU conspiracy puts interest rates up, then it’s hard to get work or get a pay rise to keep up with the cost-of-living.

The banks' HEM conspiracy (plus RBA's lower interest rates) puts more credit in the housing market, makes house prices rise even faster, you pay even more for a home, and still can't keep up with the cost of living. It's a conspiracy!

Another Longshore Death: Man 'Crushed to Death' in Accident at North Lincolnshire Port

A man has died after an accident at a North Lincolnshire port. Health and Safety Executive officials are investigating the tragedy, which happened at the Groveport site on the River Trent at Gunness.

Police have confirmed a 54-year-old man died following the accident, which happened yesterday afternoon. It is understood he was crushed by a four-tonne iron girder which was being operated by a crane when it collided with the worker. The man is believed to be from the Haxey area and was working to load a boat with girders.



Image: Google Maps

Dock operator PD Ports, whose head office is in Middlesbrough, suspended operations at the site for investigations to take place and for all staff to be interviewed, including the crane operator.

A spokeswoman for PD Ports said: "We can confirm that an industrial accident occurred at our Groveport operations yesterday afternoon. Tragically a much liked and valued colleague was fatally injured in the accident.

"A comprehensive investigation commenced immediately following the accident and is continuing. We continue to offer active support to the investigating authorities. Our thoughts are with our colleague, his family, friends and other colleagues. Operations at Groveport have been suspended."

The firm has recently received an award from the North Lincolnshire Health and Safety Group for its work in protecting staff at work and achieving safety standards above the nationally-required level. The award was made in February.

An East Midlands Ambulance Service spokeswoman said: "We received a call at 2.18pm to Grove Wharf in Gunness, near Scunthorpe. The caller reported that someone was experiencing a medical emergency.

"We sent a LIVES Community First Responder, two paramedics in ambulance cars, a crewed ambulance and the air ambulance to the scene."

A Health and Safety Executive spokeswoman said: "HSE is aware of this incident and investigating alongside the police." A file is being prepared for the Grimsby and North Lincolnshire senior coroner designate, Mark Kendall.

A Humberside Police spokesman said: "A 54-year-old man has died while working on a boat on the River Trent near to Gunness. Officers were called to the incident yesterday around 2.30pm. His family have been informed.

"We are currently working with the Health and Safety Executive and are investigating the cause of the man's death."

Workplace Mental Health

Struggling with a work-related psychological injury? Support is just a call or click away. Our independent, confidential and free service can help connect you with the right community services. Any Queenslanders experiencing work-related psychological injury can call our experienced social worker on 1800 370 732 (9AM to 5PM, Monday to Friday) by email info@wpss.org.au, or find out more at <http://www.wpss.org.au>



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WORKERS' PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT SERVICE

Queensland Council of Unions

BHP Runaway Train Crash: Workers Applied Brakes to Wrong Train

Source: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/mar/12/bhp-runaway-train-crash-workers-applied-brakes-to-wrong-train?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other
Report finds mistake occurred before train rolled away in remote north of Western Australia and travelled 268km before being remotely derailed

Maintenance workers accidentally applied brakes to the wrong locomotive last year before a BHP train laden with iron ore travelled for 91 kilometres without a driver in Western Australia and had to be deliberately derailed.

The company was forced to derail the runaway train about 120km out of Port Hedland on 5 November, with some estimating it would cost the company \$55m a day until the track was repaired. Two locomotives, 245 ore cars and 2km of track at Turner South were destroyed in the crash.



A preliminary report released by the Australian Transport Safety Bureau on Tuesday revealed the drama began with a communication problem between the front of the train and a monitor at the end as the train travelled from Newman to Port Hedland, in the remote north of the state. This triggered an automated emergency brake and caused the train to stop as it reached Garden South.

The driver had raised the alarm with the control centre and then applied an independent brake. He got off the train at 3.53am and started applying handbrakes to the ore cars from the front of the train.

The report revealed a rail maintenance crew was called to help the driver apply the handbrakes, working from the back of the 2km long train, but they mistakenly applied them to a stationary, empty ore train, which was parked adjacent to the fully laden train.

The braking system that initially stopped the fully-laden train automatically released after an hour, while the driver was still outside. At about 4.40am, the driver heard air venting from the ore car brakes, and shortly after noticed the train was moving. The driver tried to radio call the maintenance crew to tell them the brakes had “bled off” but there was no response, the report said.

About 20 minutes later, the driver of the empty ore train contacted controllers advising that the maintenance crew had mistakenly applied handbrakes to his train. The driver, Peter Frick, was sacked but has since reached a settlement with the company after taking his case to the Fair Work Commission.

An internal investigation by BHP found the incident was the result of “procedural non-compliance by the operator” and “integration issues with the electronically controlled pneumatic braking system”.

“Even if the track support team had have attended the correct train and applied manual brakes, it would not have been enough to stop the roll-away event,” a BHP spokeswoman said in a statement.

BHP’s WA iron ore asset president, Edgar Basto, said the driver had not applied the automatic brake handle to the emergency position before leaving the cab, as required in the operating procedure and in accordance with training provided.

“If the automatic brake handle was in the emergency position as per the operating procedure, the train would not have rolled away,” he said. Basto said the company had since brought in changes to its procedures to ensure the incident wasn’t repeated.

The report said the runaway train reached a speed of 162km per hour before slowing down to about 128km. It made seven technical recommendations, including amending operating instructions for brake pipe emergencies. The transport bureau’s investigation is continuing to consider the design of BHP’s train braking systems and the procedure in the safety management system.

With additional reporting Australian Associated Press.

• This article was amended on 13 March 2019. The \$55m a day cost to BHP was an estimate suggested by someone who works in the mining industry, not than a definite figure as an earlier version implied. This has been corrected.

Are We Killing Bali? I’ve Been Deluded Thinking There Isn’t Friction

by [Brigid Delaney](#)

Source: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/mar/15/are-we-killing-bali-ive-been-deluded-thinking-there-isnt-friction-with-the-locals?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

I’ve travelled there 20 times and I know I am part of the problem. ‘The rice paddies have been gobbled up, and this sprawling replica hipster-urban village has sprung up in their place, like the saloon set on a Western movie. It all looks great on Instagram.’



Photograph: Made Nagi/EPA

This cafe does the best flat whites in town. They’re so good, the cafe doesn’t need to sell any food. It just sells a lot of flat whites and something called bulletproof coffee – which is a disgusting combo of butter and caffeine; the keto equivalent of the speedball that killed John Belushi. We’re in a developing country though – it’s a cafe for white people.

Canggu, Bali: the couple next to me are in his ‘n’ hers yoga gear. She’s complaining that there’s “too many tourists, and they’re building too many hotels”. He’s nodding and saying, “yeah, yeah, Canggu’s destroyed”. Everyone in Canggu moans about the pace of development, even as they voraciously consume the fruits of that development.

Do a yoga class, have a massage, hang out at one of the beach clubs and there’s the constant teeth-clacking vibration of jackhammers and metal grinders. Having

reflexology next to a Canggu building site can actually be quite a tense experience. As can walking ... anywhere.

In Canggu last month, I feared for my life as I walked into town on the road and narrowly avoided getting hit by cars. There's long stretches of main road with no footpaths, despite a huge increase in traffic. Public infrastructure has not kept up with private growth. And the growth, in a short space of time, has been staggering.

In 2016 a British luxury travel magazine sent me on assignment to Canggu. It was the latest hot destination, they said.

I met various marketing people from Canggu on that trip. It was after all, a press trip. But more than one of them, in the lobbies of boutique hotels, confessed their fears about the future of Canggu.

One Brazilian expat working for a hotel chain said the problem with all the development was that water was running out in southern [Bali](#). You could build on every last rice field, but there wasn't enough water to go around.

It turns out around 60% of Bali's water is used by tourists, [according to research by a British academic, Stroma Cole](#). Her research shows tourism operators with deep pockets can drill further underground for water and "literally suck[ing] up their neighbours' water". The remaining water supplies are dwindling; "Water tables across Bali have dropped up to 50m in the past 10 years in parts of Bali and [60% of its watersheds are declared dry](#). The damage could become irreversible once aquifers suffer saltwater intrusion, rendering the groundwater useless for domestic purposes."

Bali relies heavily on tourism, and I have clocked up around 20 trips in 10 years for a mixture of work and leisure. I love Bali and the people. I am fascinated with how their social and religious structures coexist with such an overwhelming amount of western tourists, seemingly with little friction.

But that was deluded, wasn't it, to think there was no friction?



*A surfboard rental stall in Canggu.
Photograph: Kevin Hellon/Alamy Stock Photo*

I left Canggu after a week, and filed my story. As is the way of such luxury magazines, it focused on the positives. I talked about the coffee.

Three years later the streets of Canggu are unrecognisable, and much of the beachfront has been blocked out by development. So many new landmarks have been erected that my bearings have vanished.

As Canggu morphs from a sleepy fishing village and surfing spot into something more global, the aesthetic is remarkably similar to other hipster hubs around the world. The street art around Canggu looks similar to the street art in Bushwick and Kreuzberg (and in fact could be the same street art, as these dudes fly around the world accepting commissions and projects). The cafes have a similar fit out to a Melbourne laneway cafes (in fact one such cafe is actually called Little Flinders, after a Melbourne laneway).

We could be anywhere – but we're in Bali – and all of this is new. The rice paddies have been gobbled up, and this sprawling replica hipster-urban village has sprung up in their place, like the saloon set on a Western movie. It all looks great on Instagram.

On the way from the airport during this visit my driver was as close to angry as I've seen a Balinese person get. We took a back road into town and it was much changed since my last visit.

"The farmers sell the rice paddies to the foreigners and they build their villas, and then the farmers sit back and they spend all the money, and then struggle when there is no land left to farm," he said.



Rice paddies in Canggu. Photograph: Igor Prahin/Alamy Stock Photo

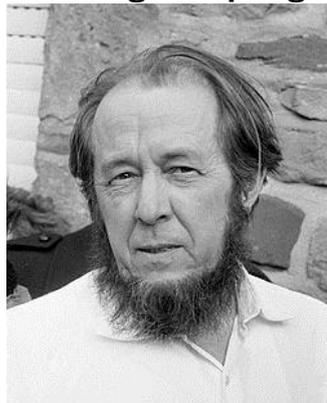
Much of the growth and appeal of Canggu centers around the wellness industry – yoga studios, day spas, surf schools, vegan restaurants.

Yet there is, of course, a disconnect in this. In tending your own garden – nurturing your own personal wellness at the expense of mother nature – you are engaging in cognitive dissonance on a grand scale.

What's the point of a healthy cholesterol reading and a low BMI if there's no drinking water? As a travel writer, I am complicit in the problematic loop that Canggu is caught in. We write about a spot that is on the verge of becoming hot, and those articles can add to the hype of a place, attracting more people, putting more pressure on the already stretched natural resources. A hundred places to get a good flat white is just a distraction from the reality: we're killing Canggu.

Book Review by Bob Carnegie

The Gulag Archipelago by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn



FEW BOOKS WRITTEN in my lifetime have had such a profound effect on my life's philosophical and moral outlook as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's engaging masterpiece, *The Gulag Archipelago*.

Few writers of the 20th century had the impact of Solzhenitsyn who laid bare the horrors of the Soviet

system. For me, once a believer in the Soviet Union, it helped remove the blinkers of falsehoods and the blood and the pillars of salt the USSR was built upon.

The Gulag Archipelago forced me to confront these issues and mature and see the world less through ideological lenses.

DM Thomas, Solzhenitsyn's biographer writes "Solzhenitsyn, born into a world of revolution in 1918. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has lived a life which will serve as a permanent reminder of the crimes committed in the name of communism as well as a Nobel Laureate for Literature, campaigner for human rights, advocate of free speech and merciless critic of the Soviet System. Like countless other Red Army soldiers, Solzhenitsyn found his patriotism and his bravery was rewarded with arrest – in his case for making derogatory statements about Stalin."

In 1945 he was subjected to 8 years in a labour camp followed by perpetual internal exile. From these horrors, and from the zeks (prisoners) he came to know and love, Solzhenitsyn became a voice against Soviet tyranny and becoming perhaps the 20th century's most influential writer.

The Gulag Archipelago is not an easy read but a necessary one for all of us who believe in a better, more democratic society based on true working class democracy.

The foreword to *The Gulag Archipelago* sums up Solzhenitsyn's dedication to the truth in his address to the Swedish Academy on his acceptance of the Noble Prize for Literature. It is called:

One Word of Truth Shall Outweigh the Whole World

Once we have taken up the word, it is thereafter impossible to turn away. A writer is no detached judge of his countrymen and contemporaries; he is an accomplice to all the evil committed in his county or by his people. And if the tanks of his fatherland have bloodied the pavement of a foreign capital, then rust-colored stains have forever bespattered the writer's face. And if on some fateful night a trusting Friend is strangled in his sleep – then the palms of the writer bear the bruises from that rope. And if his youthful fellow citizens nonchalantly proclaim the advantages of debauchery over humble toil,

if they abandon themselves to drugs, or seize hostages – then this stench too is mingled with the breath of the writer. Have we the insolence to declare that we do not answer for the evils of today's world?...

*This simple act of an ordinary brave man is not to participate in lies, not to support false actions! His rule: Let **that** come into the world, let it even reign supreme – only not through me. But it is within the power of writers and artists to do much more: to **defeat the lie!** For in the struggle with lies art has always triumphed and shall always triumph! Visibly, irrefutably for all! Lies can prevail against much in this world, but never against art...*

Delegates Training

The Queensland Branch will be running a delegates training course on the 25th and 26th of March at the Union Rooms. All interested members should contact the Queensland Branch on 3395 7215 as soon as possible to register your interest. Long term member, Paul Williams will be conducting the training along with other special invited guests. Union training leave will be applied for at your workplace therefore it is essential to give us as much notice as possible if you wish to attend.

Cartoon Corner



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