

Membership Newsletter

July 2021
Volume 3 Issue 4



RTBU WA PTA BRANCH UPDATE



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1. Secretary's Address
2. Union Meme!
3. A Quote with Relevance
4. Out on Track
5. Tax Time
6. Waging War!
7. Award-Dependent
8. Super to Rise!
9. Workplace Bullying

Secretary's Address

Your employer, whether they are the PTA, Spotless, MSS, or Bombardier, they have a business to run and as a business they are likely to face challenges that affect both their business and you as employees.

Sometimes these challenges are small, such as introducing a new staff training program. Other times they are large, such as a loss of contract. Best practice employers examine and talk about these challenges with their staff and their respective unions. They aim for a genuine exchange of information and opinions and collaborate to reach solutions. Put simply, they consult.

Consultation means asking for and considering employees' and their unions views when making decisions. Cooperation means working together harmoniously to find solutions. Employers who take a consultative and cooperative approach still have the right to make the final decision on how to manage their business. Those employees, however, who are afforded the opportunity to be part of the process are more likely to accept change and are less likely to feel anxious or fearful. Being consulted about important decisions in the workplace can improve an employee's engagement with their work. Simple really.

Recently, and because of concerns raised by our Union, I received a letter signed by the A/Chief Executive Officer of the PTA that constitutes his commitment that "all Branches within that Division and indeed the PTA will comply with relevant consultative provisions within Industrial Agreements". In addition, the letter identifies that he has "requested that relevant officers pay close attention to relevant provisions generally in regard to changes impacting on our operations with Metronet projects". This is a step in the right direction, and a hopefully a positive sign of things to come.

A Quote with Relevance

"It took untold generations to get you where you are. A little gratitude might be in order." - Dr. Jordan B Peterson

Union Meme!



Out on Track



Below are just **some** of the recent and current issues/matters dealt with by our Union:

- Initiated enquiries and raised concerns with both the communication, and conduct of, health assessments by the PTA/OSH Group, particularly their blood sample consent form.
- Ensured our public sector members were aware of their ability to access the COVID vaccine during work hours.
- Supported numerous members through discipline investigations, including drafting responses to allegations, attending interviews, and viewing CCTV of incidents.
- Provided feedback and input on the new TTO Railcar Driver Agreement, negotiated payment terms for future training requirements related to Metronet for Urban Railcar Drivers, and commenced research for their upcoming Work Value Review
- Met with the TTO GM to discuss safety concerns and alike with the premature opening of Claremont station & triggered immediate safety improvements by TTO Safety.
- Assisted a member with 5 days' worth of their sick leave entitlement being recredited.
- Reviewed proposed roster changes for PTA Customer Service staff, provided feedback, and reviewed aggregate & annual leave loading calculations.
- Met with Security Services Management to discuss numerous membership concerns resulting in positive changes to some previously issued Notices to Staff (NTS).
- Addressed concerns with the use of Relief Lines resulting in positive roster changes.
- Assisted a member to return to their previous substantive position of Transit Officer.
- Addressed concerns with TransWA regarding use, access, and regulation to the audio and visual CCTV & GPS capabilities contained within the Road Coaches.
- Referred and managed members' interactions with industrial, family, criminal, and workers/criminal compensation lawyers.
- Attended the Public Sector Alliance launch event & gave a speech at the SSTUWA's State Council explaining the impact of the Wages Policy to RTBU members.
- Responded to emails, calls, and provided advice daily to countless members on a range of workplace topics and issues.
- Reviewed and provided feedback on the draft changes addressing customer service skills and knowledge related to ticketing and security requirements.
- Engaged in an extensive campaign to prevent mandatory in-cab surveillance legislation.

“Met with the TTO GM to discuss safety concerns and alike with the premature opening of Claremont station & triggered immediate safety improvements by TTO Safety.”

THE POWER OF UNION

“Addressed concerns with TransWA regarding use, access, and regulation to the audio and visual CCTV & GPS capabilities contained within the Road Coaches.”

Tax Time

It is that time of the year again when everyone starts to get ready to visit their accountant. If you are a fully paid-up member for the 2020/2021 financial year, you can claim the full amount of \$676 (or pro-rata thereof) with the ATO.

That is right, your Union dues are 100% tax deductible, and you are entitled to claim them at tax time! Another reason to encourage a colleague to join.

If you require an individual tax letter, please contact our office on 9225 6722. Alternatively, you can email Robyn or Martine at general@rtbuwa.asn.au and we will endeavour to get one emailed to you within 5 business days.

Great news is that the new membership database, nearing completion, will send customised individual tax statements to each member automatically next FY.



Waging War!

Our Government's belligerence over maintaining the State pay cap for its employees has convinced me to join forces with other public sector unions to take action on a united front.

The McGowan Government capped public sector pay rises at a maximum \$1000 a year in 2017, supposedly for four years. But straight after winning power again this year - thanks in no small part to the support of the State's union movement - the Government is choosing to further extend the cap for another two years. I and other Union Leaders say that this betrayal is now an effective six year pay freeze, at a time the WA Government is running a \$3 billion surplus.

Recently, our Union, your delegates, and many members have worked very hard on negotiations. But while the subsequent enterprise agreements recently negotiated delivered several significant workplace gains, the \$1000 pay cap has left many of you no doubt disillusioned with our Labor Government. Much because the Government's wages policy has removed the ability to conduct genuine enterprise bargaining.

We have got a State Government that is doing very well and has got one of the best economies in Australia, if not the world, on the back of the budget boost because of the booming iron ore price.

Four years ago, we reluctantly accepted that the State's books were not great, but I believe as members you have played your part for all West Australians. You have worked through the uncertainties of the pandemic and now you deserve to go back to genuine enterprise bargaining.

I had considered stronger action recently in an attempt to break the Government's pay stranglehold but had seen the cost borne by members in other unions that had tried to go it alone on that path. It became apparent that we must do something collectively, that all public sector unions must act together.

We have joined the Public Sector Alliance, where we can be part of a collective movement in 2022. The Public Sector Alliance now includes our Union, UnionsWA, the United Workers' Union, WA Prison Officers' Union, State School Teachers' Union WA, Health Services Union WA, United Professional Firefighters Union of WA, and Professionals Australia. With many others looking to jump onboard.

Our Alliance covers more than 100,000 state public sector employees. As public sector unions we are committed to continuing the fight for genuine investment in public services - and the people who deliver them - but the current, restrictive, public sector wages policy is a significant barrier to this investment.

So, we are promising a united campaign - a "Blue in' 22" - to end the restrictive public sector wages policy, force a return to genuine enterprise bargaining in the public sector; and secure outcomes that represent a meaningful investment in public sector workers.

Our Alliance will use all our resources, political, industrial, or organisational, to secure a successful outcome for all Alliance unions in the 2022 rounds of bargaining, as enough is enough!

For more information, access to news articles, and video interviews visit <https://www.rtbuwa.asn.au/2021/06/09/enough-is-enough/>



"It became apparent that we must do something collectively, that all public sector unions must act together."



"So, we are promising a united campaign - a "Blue in' 22" - to end the restrictive public sector wages policy"

Opinion article snippet: **PAGE 13 OPINION Unions lift lid on wage cap**. Alliance forms to demand Government increases pay offers. Includes a photo of Peter Law and a cartoon illustration of a man with a large head.

Award-Dependent

The union movement recently won, effective July 1, a 2.5% pay increase for a quarter of all Australian workers through the Fair Work Commission's annual minimum wage case, despite hard-line opposition. Sadly, the Morrison Government, most State Governments, and big business wanted pay cuts or freezes.

This pay rise will raise the annual minimum wage to \$40,175.20 and the hourly rate to \$20.33 and will also flow through to those who are award-dependent, lifting the wages of 1 in 4 workers including our Spotless' cleaner membership.

Wage growth has remained effectively stagnant for 8 years.

Super to Rise!

After a lifetime of work, all Australians deserve a comfortable retirement. For most people, superannuation will play an important part in helping secure a modest lifestyle.

Thanks to the campaigning and hard work of unions, a system of compulsory superannuation began operating in 1992. As a result of further campaigning by unions, and their members, a previous Labor government introduced laws that will see the minimum superannuation guarantee increase to 12%.

As of July 1, 2021, superannuation will increase to 10%, and every year thereafter an additional 0.5%, until it finally reaches 12% by 2025.

Workplace Bullying

Bullying is repeated and unreasonable behaviour that creates a risk to health and safety. Bullying behaviour can be as direct as making threats, swearing at, or abusing a worker, physical stand over tactics, or sexual harassment. It may also be more subtle and indirect.

Bullying behaviour may take the following forms:

- aggressive or intimidating conduct;
- belittling or humiliating comments;
- spreading malicious rumours;
- teasing, practical jokes or 'initiation ceremonies';
- exclusion from work-related events;
- displaying offensive material;
- pressure to behave in an inappropriate manner;

Bullying occurs when:

- a person (or a group) repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards a worker (or a group) at work; AND
- that unreasonable behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

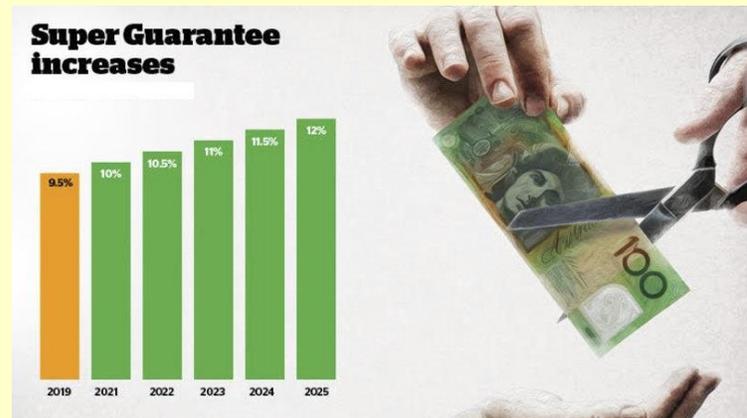
Men and women at all levels of employment can be affected by bullying. Bullying behaviour can adversely affect the health and wellbeing of workers and may lead to stress-related illness, mental health issues and possibly workers' compensation claims. Confronting a workplace bully can be a difficult and stressful task.

For information on how to put a stop to workplace bullying please visit: <https://www.rtbuwa.asn.au/2021/06/25/put-a-stop-to-workplace-bullying/>

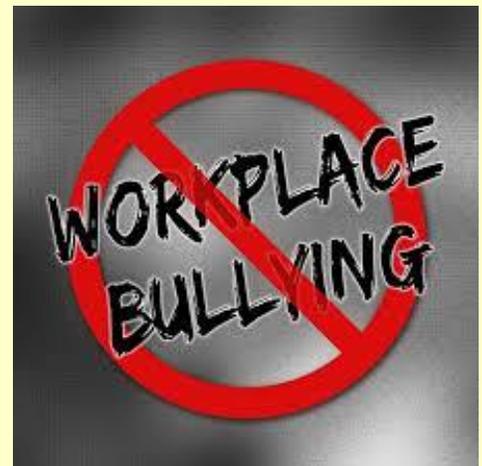
Wage suppression in our country needs to stop. Suppressing wages hurts the economic recovery and it hurts working people, their families, and communities. There can be no economic recovery without a wage's recovery.

Pay increases will be spent in local communities across the country and will help small and medium businesses as well as working people get back on their feet.

Government needs to change their policies that are keeping wages low by supporting pay increases for their own workers, supporting more secure jobs, and changing laws to restore bargaining power to workers.



Superannuation would not exist had it not been for the campaigns fought by union members in the 1970s and 1980s.



Put a stop to workplace bullying!

Rail Tram and Bus Union
Unit 2/10 Nash Street, Perth WA 6000
www.rtbuwa.asn.au
general@rtbuwa.asn.au
(08) 9225 6722