



## Dead in the Water: the dangers of water privatisation

The ASU has just released a new report into the dangers of water privatisation, called "*Dead in the Water: the dangers of water privatisation.*"

Around the world communities are fighting back against the impact that privatisation has had on local communities.

The Victorian government had enshrined in the state's constitution that 'water would not be privatised'.

Nevertheless, there is a lot of contracting out of services, so it is much of the same thing. The paper is produced by Dr. Patricia Randal from the ACTU Organising, Education and Campaign centre.

Go to the ASU National website at [www.asu.asn.au](http://www.asu.asn.au) to view the document.



### **ASU Victorian Assistant Secretary helping out in Tassie**

In early August, the ASU held a meeting of two groups of former Tasmanian local government employees with something in common: both groups had been transferred by local councils and are now employed by Hobart Water. What has remained unclear is whether they will retain the same pay and conditions they enjoyed when employed in local government.

ASU Victorian Assistant Secretary Michael Rizzo has been involved in these negotiations on behalf of the ASU National Union and the ASU Tasmanian branch.

More news on this as it comes to hand.

### **Water EBAs**

**Many of the EBAs within the water industry expire in 2012. There are negotiations under way at Western Port Water, and a number of other organisations.**

#### Westernport Water:

An EBA is agreed in principle. The new EBA is a three-year agreement with a four per cent pay rise per annum or \$40 (whichever is the greater). There are also increases to allowances and no loss of entitlements. Agreement is with the Department of Sustainability and Environment and the Department of Treasury and Finance for approval before going out to the vote.

#### Gippsland Water:

The ASU has just commenced negotiations with management, having nothing significant in terms of log of claims. The ASU will be aiming to push for Industry standard as a minimum and ensuring no conditions will be lost. The ASU is hoping to have a position to put to members by the end of August.

### **Victorian Catchment Management Authorities (CMAs)**

The Victorian government has published a white paper entitled "securing our natural future". The paper looks at the health of Victoria's land, water and bio-diversity.

The CMAs have an important integrating function in the management of Victoria's land, water and bio-diversity. There is a proposal to establish five new bodies, the Melbourne Water and Catchment Authority and four Natural Resource and Catchment Authorities to provide a coordinated response across catchments, coasts and oceans into the future.

It is obvious that such changes will impact on jobs of ASU members in this sector. The ASU is seeking urgent discussions with the Victorian government.

### **Parks Victoria update**

In March, Parks Victoria advised the ASU by letter that they intended to relocate 70 staff from Bourke St, Melbourne, to Box Hill. The letter from Parks Victoria stated that it would be 48 staff from the Sustainable Infrastructure Division and a further 20 from another work unit "yet to be identified".

Shortly afterwards, the affected staff were briefed and provided with a memo from the CEO. From this point, the ASU attempted to engage Parks Victoria in consultation.

Management argued that the above satisfied the requirements for consultation under the EBA, despite not even identifying the additional 20 staff in their letter to the ASU!

The ASU met with Parks Victoria and submitted an alternative proposal on behalf of members which would call for an expression of interest from staff from any area that wished to move to Box Hill. This could reduce or eliminate the need for forced relocations. We were aware that there were other staff who wanted to move because it was closer to home.

This proposal was rejected outright. We were also informed through this process that Parks Victoria intends to relocate the staff from Box Hill again, along with other staff from Bourke St to Bushy Park in the coming years.

Unsatisfied with the level of consultation, we listed the matter for conciliation at Fair Work Australia. At the hearing, the parties agreed to hold an extra ordinary Consultative Committee meeting to further consult on the move.

#### **As a result, we have agreed on the following:**

- That elected health and safety representatives would be invited to be on the working group for the Box Hill relocation
- That further discussion would take place at the Staff Consultative Committee on the meaning of consultation and role of the SCC
- That the proposed move to Bushy Park is raised and discussed at the SCC at each stage of the process

## Energy

AGL Hydro

The ASU commenced negotiations at Mount Beauty on July 20 and presented our concerns to management, as we feel this company is falling further behind when compared its counterparts. Management have listened to the concerns and another meeting has been set for August 11.

SP/AusNet

The union is working with delegates negotiating the latest EBA for SP AusNet. A comprehensive survey of members was done and log of claims developed. The old agreement expires in early October. SP AusNet is an amalgamated company that covers both distribution and transmission businesses that have their own agreement. The last attempt was to bring the agreements into one, but there are still a number of clauses that apply to the different units and two different pay structures. This is the challenge that lies before the union.

## Vic Roads

TSS (Transport Safety Services)

The aim of VicRoads Transport Safety Services (TSS) is to improve heavy vehicle road safety and protect roads and bridges from damage, by ensuring that heavy vehicles comply with heavy vehicle regulations.

ASU members in this area have a tough job. Of late, there have been OHS issues arise, and VicRoads has the responsibility to provide a safe and healthy workplace. The OHS issues include:

- harassment
- alleged assault
- intimidation
- personal protective equipment incident report
- policies and procedures

About 50 incidents have been reported over the past four years. ASU OHS representatives and delegates have been continuously attempting to address these issues. VicRoads seems tardy in their task of resolving these matters. The ASU position is zero tolerance to any physical incidents occurring by the public or internally towards TSS officers. OHS controllers need to implement resolutions to eliminate risk within the workplace. The OHS representatives and delegates have formally requested the assistance of the ASU to help resolve these issues. Meetings are now taking place with management.

## SISTER 2 SISTER PROGRAM



In order to pursue our goals as women workers and women unionists, we need to mentor, support and encourage more of us to **STAND UP!** We get gains when we are confident, knowledgeable and supported!

## CALLING FOR SISTERS

A mentoring program has been designed to develop the knowledge and skills of our less experienced or new female unionists, who will receive mentoring from some of our more experienced female union members. The idea of the sister to sister mentoring program is to encourage leadership of women in the union movement by:

- matching experienced female union members and delegates with those less experienced in the same or across workplaces;
- mentors to be available to talk with mentees about situations they are in at work as delegates/members, help them brainstorm strategies in a context of understanding/having similar experience;
- matching female mentors and mentees in the field enhances grassroots perspective of the union movement as members and delegates build their ties to each other, thus strengthening the understanding members have of their role and power within the movement;
- experienced female union member/delegate mentors to provide role modelling to less experienced women delegates/members to try and encourage genuine leadership within the union movement, not just through the allocated affirmative action strategies

We are seeking nominations from members to become "Sister Mentors" or "Sister Mentees". The Mentor will be able to assist and provide guidance to the Mentee with how to approach issues within their workplace, as well as assisting to build confidence in speaking up about issues that are important to you and your colleagues and ways to become actively involved in the ASU. Mentees will then be able to look to their Mentor for expertise within their work life experience and assist them in their Union activities.

## FORTHCOMING TRAINING DATES ARE MAY 5 & SEPTEMBER 15

If you wish to participate in this program, either as a "Sister Mentor" or "Sister Mentee", please contact Maria Kaplanis on (03) 9342 3410 or via email [mkaplanis@asuvic.com](mailto:mkaplanis@asuvic.com)