



## Great EBA result for City of Greater Bendigo members

The new three-year EBA deal at the City of Greater Bendigo (CoGB) kicked into action last month, with employees at the Council enjoying up to a 12 per cent pay increase over the life of the agreement.

ASU Organiser Billy King said that the pay result was a good one and just rewards for ASU members who worked hard during the negotiation process.

"The Agreement provides for three salary increases of four per cent for staff employed at Bands 1 to 4 (or equivalent) and 3.8 per cent for staff employed at Band 5 or above for 2010, 2011 and 2012. I think the increases are a great result for members, as is the personal leave clause which now includes things such as sick leave for personal injury, illness or medical condition, carer's leave, natural disaster incidences and breast screening examinations."

"Also, from January 1, 2011, all ongoing staff commencing with the CoGB will receive their 12 days personal leave entitlements on commencement, instead of receiving it at different times depending on where they work," said Billy.

"Another plus is the new Flexibility clause allowing staff to enter into an individual agreement around their employment conditions, including arrangements about when work is performed, overtime rates, penalty rates and allowances."

ASU delegate and Finance Officer at the Performing Arts Centre Deborah Blake said the recent EBA agreement was a great result for members.

"I think we moved forward as much as we could. There was some reluctance from Council with some of the requests we had, but there certainly were some really



*Delegate Deborah Blake is pleased with the outcomes of the new EBA*

important improvements in this EBA. In the last EBA we were able to get some big items, but this time was more about adjusting things with a few significant changes along the way."

"Everybody in the Council was looking for a four per cent wage rise per year, and I think to get that amount annually for people in the lower-wage brackets was a great result."

"It was great to have Billy King alongside us during negotiations. Having the union and all its resources, including details from other agreements was something we could successfully bring to the table. Billy was thanked for his negotiation skills by members and also management at the Council, which I think helped in some of the outcomes we gained," said Deborah.

## Mildura City Council *Restructure*

**After plans for an Organisational Restructure at Mildura Rural City Council (MRCC) - which could have cost some ASU members their jobs - the ASU lodged a dispute with MRCC before Fair Work Australia (FWA).**

Members were concerned with the lack of consultation, the absence of detailed information being provided by Management and the apparent inconsistent approach to how positions have been abolished, restructured, advertised, and appointments made.

ASU's decision to lodge a dispute with Fair Work Australia did get Council management to look at it from the members' point of view, according to ASU Organiser Danny Harris.

"As a result of the ASU's actions, members did start receiving - albeit belatedly - a number of 'updates' from MRCC Management about the restructure. This occurred after ASU members were filled with angst and stress as to what the future would hold."

"ASU members affected by this restructure who have sought representation have indicated that their issues have now been dealt with to their satisfaction. This includes appointment to positions and, in one case, a redundancy paid in full as sought by the member. ASU will continue to monitor the situation to ensure full and proper

consultation occurs, should any further organisational restructures or workplace changes be proposed by Management.

"ASU has identified nothing in MRCC's approach thus far (except when forced to consult because of an industrial dispute) which leads us to believe that this 'restructure' is concluded. It begs the question: How far down the line will these changes to staffing levels, position classifications, work load spreading and their obvious impacts on our members go?"

"The ASU will continue to represent the best interests of our members in this and every workplace situation. We will monitor this process and provide further union updates should the need arise."

## ASU life membership to CEO first of its kind



*Kerryn Shade (L) congratulated by ASU Organiser Dave Beckley, is the first CEO to receive ASU life membership*

It's not usual for a CEO of a Council to understand the virtues of a unionised workplace, but then again Horsham Rural City Council's Kerryn Shade is not your usual CEO.

Kerryn became a union member back in 1965 while working for the City of Frankston, and despite his gradual rise to the top of the Council tree, continued to support a union's presence within a workplace, which is something he remains very proud of.

"I have always encouraged staff to join the union to protect their interests, even in my role as CEO. I said I cannot always look after you and your industrial interests when I leave, so joining the union is the way to go. The ASU have always been happy with my industrial skills, and I feel and we have had no

industrial trouble at Horsham Rural City Council in my 15 years as CEO. We have always been able to settle issues in a harmonious way and talking them out."

"I can't force staff to join the ASU, but I certainly encourage them to. I was around when Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) came through and saw the downside of people losing their jobs, so I encourage employees to join the ASU for their own protection. A different CEO might come through with different industrial ideas, so it's imperative that staff join the union to protect themselves."

Considering Kerryn's views, the ASU have awarded the long-time union supporter with an ASU life membership – the first Council CEO to receive such an honour in Australia.

"It is rare for a CEO to receive this honour and I feel privileged to receive life membership of the ASU. I will write to the ASU to thank them for this honour of life membership," said Kerryn.

"I've always allowed unions access to the workplace, even during the Howard years and the dreaded Workchoices regime. I hear some CEOs are on the employees' dartboard, but that is something I've happily avoided as I've always been harmonious with staff."

Before his departure in late August, Kerryn signed off on a new three-year EBA at the Horsham City Council, which was fully endorsed by staff and the ASU.

The ASU congratulates Kerryn on his life membership and wishes him all the best during retirement.

Another successful Horsham EBA with CEO Kerryn Shade at the helm...

The ASU and management at Horsham City Rural Council have reached an agreement in regards to the current round of enterprise negotiations.

"CEO Kerryn Shade is very easy to work with, so once again the talks were brief and productive and we believe the agreement has been received well by our members. I just wanted to thank all ASU members and delegates, whose tireless work helped create smooth running throughout negotiations," announced ASU Organiser Dave Beckley.

ASU delegate and Council worker Anthony Woodhead said that the members were pleased with the outcome.

"In the current economic climate, I think we achieved a result that the members were all happy with. The wage increases were good and the ability to take long service leave after seven years (previously 10) was certainly something that we are pleased with. Dave Beckley did a fantastic job for us."

Some of the gains received by members at the Council from the current EBA include...

- A three-year agreement.
- Annual pay increases of 4 per cent or \$38 (whichever the greater each year).
- Long service leave after seven years, pro rata.
- Band 2 for all certificated Home Carers.
- Improved rights for Union delegates.
- Adoption of ASU dispute resolution model clause.
- \$150 increase in end of band payment.
- Improved parental leave provision.
- Penalty rates paid if required to work RDO.
- Improved redundancy provision, resulting in an extra \$3000.
- 3D Banding cap for truck drivers removed.
- Improved sick leave provision.

## Delegate Profile



*Peter Spratt*

of their work, had been a member of unions for decades and wanted to assist in providing support for colleagues. I also wished to assist the organisation to operate more effectively and fairly and saw the ASU as a means of interacting with management to that effect. I had previously served on OHS and Staff Consultative Committees (here and elsewhere).

What made you become a delegate? I became a delegate around 18 months ago because there were only a few delegates here - some having left the organization - and those that remained appeared to have a lot of work to do. I had been a beneficiary

Why do you think it is important workers join the union?

It's important that people join the union as it provides them with a voice in the general running of the organisation, along with a voice at crucial times, such as when a new EBA is negotiated.

The union is only as strong as its members and the more members it has, the stronger it becomes. The union is also - and perhaps most importantly - there to protect its members from actions that may threaten their health, employment or opportunities. The conditions of work that we often regard as normal and natural have been fought for, often bitterly, over many decades, but they are not enshrined as rights. Many men and women made great sacrifices to get us where we are today. As we have seen with the actions of State and Federal governments in recent years, the conditions of work that were fought for can readily be taken away. We honour those who came before us and protect ourselves by making the union strong.

## TRAGEDY

The Australian Services Union expresses its deepest condolences to the family of ASU member Peter Pettinella, 58, who recently died at work as a result of a tragic accident.

Peter – a tractor operator at Yarra Ranges Shire - is survived by his wife Gail, his two daughters Andrea and Sarah and his son, Joshua.

Our thoughts are with the Pettinella family during this trying time.