

# Unions launch offensive against outsourcing

**BETWEEN 700,000 AND ONE MILLION JOBS IN THE SERVICE SECTOR COULD BE LOST IN THE BIGGEST OFF-SHORING OF AUSTRALIAN JOBS IN OUR HISTORY, ACCORDING TO A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF AUSTRALIAN LABOUR MARKET TRENDS.**

The report, Off-shore and Off-work, commissioned by the Australian Services Union (ASU), found that one in ten service sector jobs could be sent offshore over the next 20 years.

Qantas, Telstra, ANZ, National Australia Bank, Westpac and St George have been identified as the top six companies that have already outsourced work in data processing, IT and call centres.

The service sector is the cornerstone of the Australian economy, with other sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture and mining either in decline or facing significant long-term challenge.

In the short term, the recently announced review of the Australian tax system should consider new incentives to retain jobs in Australia. Iconic Australian brands should not be allowed to shift jobs offshore.

The report also noted: "Service industries will be based on a global workforce with firms seeking to maximise efficiency and competitive advantage based on global availability of skills, scale, quality, innovation and cost competitiveness."

Off-shore and Off-work pointed out "At some point in the future, the virtual office will become a reality. Only services that require face to face contact (nursing, wait staff) will be tied to a particular location."

If you have a phone and computer for your work and don't need face to face contact, your job is at risk. This is of great concern to many ASU members.



## **QANTAS: A CASE STUDY**

Qantas staff know all too well that their CEO, Geoff Dixon is the master at reaping rewards for shareholders and managers at the expense of workers' pay and conditions.

In the last few years, Qantas has:

- Shed over three hundred IT jobs as these were moved to India.
- Made at least a thousand full time Australian cabin crew positions redundant and replaced them with crew based in Auckland, Bangkok and London.
- Recruited overseas pilots on 457 visas for its Jetstar operations.
- Outsourced a significant amount of engineering work overseas in an effort to drive down costs.

Now in the light of the increased fuel prices, Dixon has announced services will be cut and with that, the probable loss of more jobs at Qantas.

Workers can only resist the practice of off shoring by remaining united and encouraging their colleagues to join them in the fight by joining their union and becoming active in campaigns against this. The great success of the Your Rights at Work campaign last year demonstrates that the fight to stop these jobs losses can be won.

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## FROM THE SECRETARY



### Your Rights at Work – still at risk

It is becoming clearer that negotiations with the Federal Government on the new IR laws are not proceeding as ASU members expected. It looks like we all have no choice other than to restart the “Your Rights at Work” campaign which brought down the Howard Government.

ASU members fought hard for five key things during the WorkChoices campaign. They were:

1. Abolition of AWA's
2. Restoration of unfair dismissal rights
3. Protection of our awards
4. Restoration of the role of the independent umpire, and
5. Restoration of collective bargaining rights

While we have won on AWAs, the future of many of the other things we campaigned for is currently in doubt. There are two that are immediately most concerning:

#### 1. AWARDS

The Labor Government is currently undergoing a process of “modernising” awards. This involves radically reducing the number of awards. We do not understand how this action can occur without reducing rights for workers. For example, there are currently many awards for each of our industries that have different conditions – if they are abolished, what will they be replaced with? For ASU members who depend on their award, this is a huge concern.

#### 2. THE ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT UMPIRE

It is not yet clear whether the Industrial Commission will be given any powers to resolve disputes. It will be able to “conciliate” but the Government is so far refusing to confirm whether it can also arbitrate. This is a right that workers have had for over 100 years in Australia. We believe that no boss will take conciliation seriously if they know the Commission has no power to make a decision at the end of the day.

Employers and big business have been working overtime since the Federal election pressuring the Labor Government to keep many aspects of WorkChoices in place or to re-badge them under another name.

Should this continue, we will have no choice other than to restart the “Your Rights at Work” campaign to assure the Federal Government that the people voted clearly to get rid of WorkChoices and this is exactly what we expect them to do.

### 2008/9 UNION FEES FROZEN FOR DIRECT DEBIT & CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS

The ASU executive has determined that it can keep fees at their current levels in 2008/9 for those members who pay by direct debit or credit card. Unfortunately, due to increased costs associated with issuing monthly and quarterly accounts for members, an increase of 50 cents a week will apply to these payments. In line with the union's stated aim to remove all members from payroll deductions, the 50 cent increase will also apply to these payments. This fee increase can be avoided by simply moving over to either direct debit or credit card payments. If you wish to make the switch, please complete the enclosed form and return by fax or post. The new fees will apply from 1st August.

## ONESKY SPEAKS WITH JUAN ALEJANDRO IOCCO



### Brief description of your job

I am currently employed full time with Qantas at the new Baggage services call centre. There I am responsible for responding to customer enquiries and complaints in respect to mishandled, damaged and/or uncollected baggage.

### How long have you been a member of the ASU?

I have been a union member for most of my life. I have been with the ASU since beginning work as a ground handler (TollDnata) at Sydney International airport at the beginning of the year.

### Why do you think union membership is important?

Old sayings stay around for a reason and "In unity there is strength" is as relevant today as ever. The Howard government tried to break unity into individuals through individual contracts for that reason. When you join a union you are joining together with other employees. Workers have greater ability through strength in numbers. For me the union is a way to improve conditions, to represent workers and to negotiate a contract that improves wages, benefits and working conditions. It can protect workers from unfair treatment.

### What is currently the biggest threat to jobs in the airlines industry?

I read recently that the biggest expatriation of Australian jobs in our history is currently occurring! If you have a

phone and computer for your work and don't need face to face contact, your job is at risk. When our jobs are threatened with something as serious as off-shoring the union can provide strength in numbers and keep employers aware of their responsibilities. They can let us know what's going on – by doing such things as their own comprehensive analysis of Australian labour market trends and preparing reports such as the one that came out in May which identified that one in ten service sector jobs could be sent offshore over the next 20 years. The union provides strength in numbers and protection. It is UNIONS who give us the information we need.

### Do you think the union still needs to campaign with the new government? How do we do this?

I believe that as long as money is the motivating factor in life, as long as capitalism exists, as long as the world's richest countries (that is 20 per cent of the world's population) keep consuming almost 90 per cent (while the poorest 20 per cent of the world's people account for just 1.3 per cent of consumption) we will need unions. Unions can bring balance to the power dynamic, or at the very least let you know what the minimum you can expect from your employer is.



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## AIR NEW ZEALAND BARGAINING PERIOD STARTS

**ASU MEMBERS AT AIR NEW ZEALAND HAVE BEGUN BARGAINING FOR A NEW CERTIFIED AGREEMENT. THROUGH THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN NEGOTIATIONS, AND ABILITY TO WORK TOGETHER COLLECTIVELY, MEMBERS WILL BE INFLUENTIAL IN REGULATING THEIR WAGES AND CONDITIONS.**

Of particular concern to workers at Air New Zealand is that their shift penalties are being paid differently from other Air New Zealand workers across Australia. Also, unlike other workers in the industry, payment of a higher duties allowance does not commence until the worker has been acting in that position for 5 days. Members believe that they should not be treated any differently from other workers in the industry. Negotiations will begin by looking at these obvious discrepancies between Air New Zealand staff and their colleagues in other airlines.

ASU delegate and worker at Air New Zealand, Murray Roydhouse is positive about the power of unionism during bargaining. "If we've got a strong membership, we've got more clout. Unionism gives us more strength and say."

The wages and conditions negotiated during this bargaining period are important in the uncertain economic times we are facing, particularly with the increasing cost of living and growing inflation.



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# WHAT'S GOING ON OUT THERE?

## THE FUTURE OF AVIATION: HAVE YOUR SAY

THE FUTURE OF AVIATION IN AUSTRALIA HAS BEEN PUT ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA. THE FEDERAL MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT, ANTHONY ALBANESE, HAS ANNOUNCED THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL AVIATION POLICY STATEMENT, AND THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR WORKERS IN THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY TO PROVIDE DETAILED INPUT.

An issues paper has been released and ASU members are encouraged to comment, using this opportunity to let the government know their concerns and capitalise on potential reforms.

The ASU's National Airlines Division Council (NADC)

believes it is imperative that as the largest union in the aviation industry we participate in the process to develop an aviation policy for Australia.

Considering the rapidly changing domestic and global economic uncertainties we are facing, the future of the aviation industry will be of particular concern to governments. Members have an opportunity to flex their political muscles and voice their concerns about the future shape of the industry and influence reforms in its direction.

To read the issues paper and add your comments. visit the national website on <http://www.asu.asn.au/>

## MEMBERS WIN ANNUAL LEAVE REQUEST

**TESTAMENT TO THEIR HARD WORK, NEGOTIATIONS WITH MANAGEMENT FOR CHANGES HAVE PROVEN SUCCESSFUL.**



Delegates worked hard as the voice of members to overhaul management's annual leave changes

**ASU MEMBERS WORKING FOR QANTAS AT SIT HAVE SUCCESSFULLY OVERTURNED THE PROPOSAL FOR A NEW ANNUAL LEAVE SYSTEM THAT WOULD RESTRICT BIDDING FOR HOLIDAYS TO 2,3 OR 5 WEEKS LEAVE, AND WOULD PREVENT STAFF BIDDING FOR 1 WEEK OF LEAVE.**

Delegates confronted management with complaints about the proposed annual leave system. It took multiple meetings but management eventually conceded.

ASU delegates worked tirelessly, with the help of all ASU members at SIT, to try and overcome these obstacles and restore some order in the workplace.

ASU delegate Michael Brown is happy about the win;

"Annual leave has been a nightmare for staff since bidding was introduced by management at least 10 years ago. It is a relief that management is beginning to understand that shift workers need extra consideration about annual leave because of OH&S needs".

Testament to their hard work, negotiations with management for changes have proven successful.

Stress of Qantas SIT workers has reached unprecedented levels in the past 6 months. The cumulation of issues stemming from a new automated I-roster system, increased workload in baggage services and unrealistic annual leave proposals, to name a few, have caused chaos at SIT.

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK FACT SHEET 3 – DISCIPLINE MATTERS

When you face a disciplinary matter with your employer, it is important to remember that you do have some rights. You have a right to:

1. **Know what the meeting is about and to have that put in writing to you prior to the meeting.**
2. **Representation – have someone with you – preferably your workplace delegate.**
3. **A reasonable time frame for the meeting that allows you to obtain representation and prepare a response to the written allegations against you.**
4. **A fair and proper process that conforms with the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. (Having the concerns outlined in writing, being represented, and having adequate time to respond.)**
5. **Have a copy of the organisation's Disciplinary Policy.**

The most important thing to remember with any disciplinary matter is to GET IT IN WRITING before you attend any meeting. If other matters are raised at the meeting, you should request that those matters be put to you in writing, which will allow you to prepare a response.

Members often face pressure from their employers to enter meetings without notice. Consequently they do not get the accusations against them put into writing. If they do, it is often with vague detail and there is disagreement with the outcome of the disciplinary process.

Often a member will be called into a meeting by words along the lines of "I just need to talk to you". If you find yourself in this situation – stop the boss and say – "I need you to put this matter into writing and arrange a meeting at an appropriate time when I can have someone with me". If your boss tries to argue – say to them "I am only trying to protect my rights". If the boss insists you should call the ASU for assistance.

Another common issue is disagreement over the outcome or contents of the warning. If this is the case, you should sign the warning with "signed in acknowledgement of receipt only". You should then immediately write a letter in response outlining why you don't agree with the contents or the outcome. This ensures your side of the story is on your personal file – which will be important if the action is repeated or it escalates to a dismissal.

## APPEAL TO HELP VICTIMS OF BURMA



A cyclone survivor huddles behind a corrugated iron sheet trying to cook some rice

### CYCLONE NARGIS

"Where are all those uniformed people who are always ready to beat civilians? They should come out in full force and help clean up the areas and restore electricity." — *Rangoon resident, 4 May 2008\**

Cyclone Nargis, which hit southern towns of the Irrawaddy delta in Burma, the area which produces most of Burma's rice, left tens of thousands dead and missing.

### WHAT IS THE BURMESE MILITARY JUNTA DOING?

"There is no aid. We haven't seen anyone from the government" said U Pinyatale, the abbot of the Kyi Bui Kha monastery, where almost-depleted rice stocks and precious rainwater are shared with some 100 homeless villagers huddled within its battered compound.

### TIME FOR INTERVENTION?

The case for humanitarian intervention has been gaining momentum. Although not a UN resolution or a statute under international law, the "Responsibility to Protect," or "R2P," is a framework invoked in the case of "national authorities manifestly failing to protect their populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."

In the meantime, relief is up to the Burmese people themselves and small Non Government Organisations such as Norwegian People's Aid, assisted by Union Aid Abroad who are managing relief 'under the radar' of the Generals.

To donate to the Burma Cyclone Appeal call 1800 888 674 or go to [www.unionaidabroad.org.au](http://www.unionaidabroad.org.au). Don't forget donations are tax-deductible. Why not become a regular monthly donor (a Global Justice Partner)?

### BURMA OR MYANMAR – WHAT'S IN A NAME?

On 18 June 1989, the Burmese military junta changed the English version of the country's name from Burma to Myanmar. This was done without a national referendum to have the Burmese electorate ratify the name change. Opposition groups continue to use the name "Burma", since they do not recognise the legitimacy of the ruling military government nor its authority to rename the country in English. Union Aid Abroad uses the name Burma out of respect for those struggling for rights and freedoms.

## HOW IS UNION AID ABROAD-APHEDA GETTING AID TO THE PEOPLE OF BURMA?

We are working with small teams of aid workers who are making trips into the delta region to deliver aid. Our partner organisation, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) is working with local community organisations to get aid out to the people, while avoiding tight government restrictions on development work and ensuring that funds are not misappropriated by the regime.

## WORKERS PAY A TOLL UNDER PROPOSED INDIVIDUAL CONTRACTS

WHEN THE LABOR GOVERNMENT WAS ELECTED ON THE 24TH NOVEMBER LAST YEAR, UNIONISTS WERE EXCITED AT THE INTRODUCTION OF A NEW INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS SYSTEM THAT WOULD BE FAIR, JUST AND RESTORE COLLECTIVE EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS. IT WAS EXPECTED THAT AWAS WOULD BE PHASED OUT AND EBAS WOULD BECOME THE PRINCIPLE EMPLOYMENT INSTRUMENT. UNFORTUNATELY THE USE OF INTERIM TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENTS (ITEAS) IS UNDERMINING THIS PROGRESSION.

ITEAs are two-year statutory agreements that are basically replacing AWAs. They were brought in under the Labor government's new IR laws as an attempt to phase out the use of AWAs.

At Sydney International Terminal, Toll Dnata Airport Services, who do ground handling, have sought to offer ITEAs to existing and potential staff, but these agreements do not meet the minimum legal conditions.

The proposed ITEAs offer less than the minimum conditions for airline check-in workers. According to ASU calculations, the Toll Dnata ITEA offers \$22 per hour for all hours worked and this may not compensate for all the shift penalties and allowances that would be earned if workers were paid according to the award.

In a sign of tough resistance, staff in Melbourne successfully opposed the introduction of ITEAs,

predominantly due to the strength of the 100% union membership density. In response to this outcome, ITEAs have yet to be implemented in Sydney.

There is no guarantee however that ITEAs will not be implemented in Sydney. Members need to remain united. ASU members deserve a fair agreement that protects wages and

conditions. Members need to stand with co-workers around Australia and bargain together.

**THERE IS NO  
GUARANTEE  
HOWEVER THAT  
ITEAS WILL NOT BE  
IMPLEMENTED IN  
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## KNOW YOUR HISTORY

IN THE LATE 1980'S ALL UNIONS IN AUSTRALIA UNDERWENT AMALGAMATIONS. PRIOR TO THIS THERE WERE HUNDREDS OF SMALL UNIONS. SMALL UNIONS HAD LIMITED INFLUENCE BY THEMSELVES, OTHER THAN IN THEIR IMMEDIATE WORKPLACES. UNIONS SAW THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO COMBINE OUR RESOURCES AND NUMBERS TO BUILD MORE POWERFUL AND BETTER RESOURCED UNIONS FOR WORKING PEOPLE.

The ASU came about because of a vision. Many public sector unions were in membership decline because of outsourcing policies and economic rationalism. At the same time, new industries were growing with newer unions who had starting unionising. The vision of the ASU was to bring together strongly unionised public unions and community and private sector unions in the services industries to build a strong, well resourced union which had opportunities for growth into the future.

This was a union which would benefit all, which gave declining public sector unions a future where they could grow and increase their influence, and small community and private sector unions had a base and resources in

order to expand and unionise these new industries. This would make workers in all of these industries stronger.

Our union bought together:

- public sector unions - The Sydney Water Corporation Unions, the Hunter Water Corporation Union, the Transport Officer Union ("white collar" workers in the transport industry), the Maritime Industry Union ("white collar" workers)
- the community sector union – workers in the non-government community sector
- private sector unions – the Airlines industry Union ("white collar" Airlines workers), information technology workers union and the shipping and travel officers union (workers in travel agencies and shipping companies).

The ASU has lived the vision of its founders. We have maintained our size and influence whilst most unions with no resources or no potential to grow outside one industry have declined.

## STOP PRESS: CONCERNS EMERGING OVER LABOR'S NATIONAL IR PLANS.

Concerns are beginning to emerge over Labor's plans for a new National IR system. Labor has now released the 10 national minimum standards which will be contained in law. These are supposed to sit alongside the 10 additional matters that can go in a Modern Award. The problem is that some of the 10 standards are lower than current entitlements. In addition it is unclear how the standards will link to awards, whether or not the Independent umpire (the AIRC or its replacement) will be able to sort out disputes and whether once Awards are made, they can be improved.



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