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CFMEU

JULY

MANUFACTURING

2020

**HOW WILL THE
CORONAVIRUS CRISIS HURT
THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY?**





FACING THE CORONAVIRUS HEALTH AND JOBS CRISIS

Australia is in a recession which means that the size of the economy is shrinking. It also means that Australian workers in their millions have been laid off, stood down, taken leave or had their hours reduced.

Meanwhile, the risk of further outbreaks of coronavirus as the economy reopens remains a huge concern.

Our last newsletter published on April 1 reported that 42,000 people around the world had died from coronavirus.

At the time of publishing, the number of deaths has increased by more than ten-times that amount despite most of the world going into lockdown for much of April and May.

We should "all be in this together" and many employers are working with the Union to try to save jobs and keep workplaces open and safe.

But some members have caught out unscrupulous employers trying to unfairly take advantage of the crisis at the expense of workers.

And some employers have tried to cut corners on rules designed to prevent the spread of coronavirus in the workplace.

As we face this crisis, being a union member is as important as it has ever been, if not more important.

Stay strong, know your rights, be there for each other, stay in contact with your shop-stewards, delegates, and organisers and together we will get through this.

Pay increase for minimum wage and award workers of 1.75%, but many will have to wait

The Fair Work Commission Annual Wage Review has decided to award a pay increase of 1.75% to all workers on award wages and the minimum wage. However, the effective date of the increase varies for workers in different industries and this means many CFMEU Manufacturing members covered by Awards will have to wait until 1 November for a pay rise or even February next year for laundry workers.

THE DECISION MEANS:

- Increases for workers covered by the National Minimum Wage Order will take effect from the first complete pay period starting on or after 1 July 2020
- Increases for workers covered by some Awards (frontline healthcare and social assistance workers, teachers and childcare workers and other essential services) will take effect from the first complete pay period starting on or after 1 July 2020
- Increases for workers covered by some Awards (including construction, manufacturing, timber, textile clothing and footwear and other industries) will take effect from the first complete pay period starting on or after 1 November 2020

(This includes workers covered by the Building and Construction General On-site Award, Joinery and Building Trades Award, Manufacturing and Associated Industries and Occupations Award, Textile, Clothing, Footwear and Associated Industries Award and the Timber Industry Award)

- Increases for workers covered by some Awards (accommodation/ food services, arts/recreation, aviation, retail and tourism) will take effect from the first complete pay period starting on or after 1 February 2021 (This includes workers covered by the workers covered by the Dry Cleaning and Laundry Industry Award)

The decision sees the National Minimum Wage (for adult full-time employees who are neither apprentices, trainees nor working under the supported wage system) rise by \$13 per week to \$753.80. The minimum hourly rate will be \$19.84.

Prior to the decision the ACTU and unions made the case for a 4% increase to help workers and to help stimulate the economy whereas major employer groups argued for a wage freeze.

1.75% is below current inflation rates (2.2%) so it means workers reliant on the minimum wage and Award wages face an effective pay cut when increases to the cost of living is considered.

When everyone at a workplace and industry is united and, in the union, workers have more bargaining power and often can negotiate wages above Award wages in Collective Bargaining Agreements. Together workers are stronger.

**ARE YOU A MEMBER
AND THINK YOU MAY
BE GETTING
PAID INCORRECTLY?**

**Contact the Union
or talk to your shop-
steward, delegate, or
organiser.**

Laundry Workers Gutted in Wage Review Decision

The Fair Work Commission has proven how out of touch they are by making laundry workers paid under the Dry Cleaning and Laundry Industry Award amongst the last workers to receive a wage increase.

"The decision is an insult and a slap in the face to laundry and dry-cleaning workers" said TCF National Secretary Jenny Kruschel.

"They have stood up in the face of the coronavirus health crisis"

"These workers are some of the most exploited and underpaid workers in Australia"

The Annual Wage Decision, handed down in June, provided for a staggered 1.75%

increase in Award wages in different sectors of the economy with the first group of workers to get an increase in July 2020.

But laundry workers working under the Award will have to wait until February for their pay rise. Why is it that some of the lowest paid workers need to wait when every cent they earn will be spent and put back into the economy? It is unfair and doesn't make sense at a time when the government should be trying to rebuild the economy.

The CFMEU will continue to work with all members to build power to win improved wages and conditions for laundry workers.

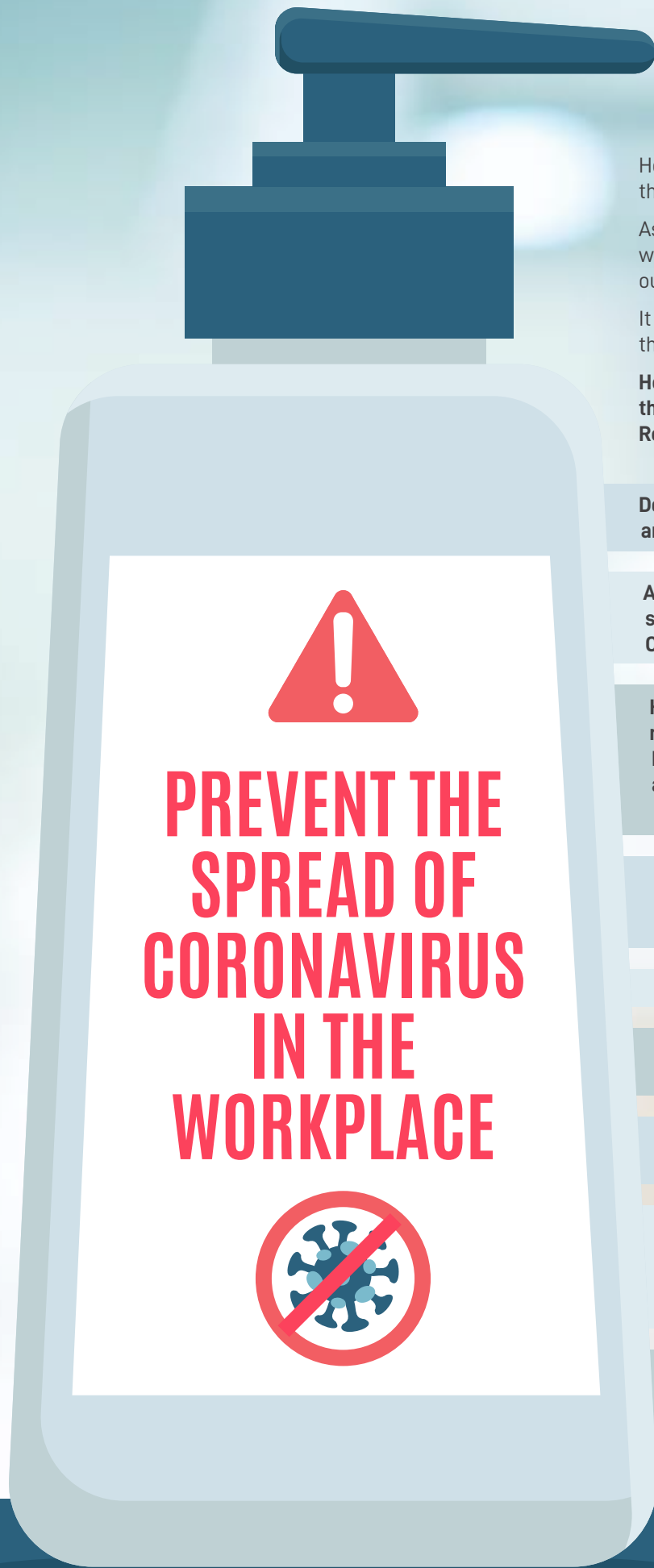
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A BETTER TIME TO

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Health and safety at work is union business and this business is more vital now than ever before.

As the economy reopens the risk of getting sick with coronavirus will increase. Any significant outbreaks will cost lives and jobs.

It is important to make sure that employers play their part in keeping a safe workplace.

Here are some questions to raise in the workplace with Health and Safety Representatives and fellow union members:

Do we have worker elected and union trained Health and Safety Representatives or delegates?

At our workplace is there a plan on what to do if someone is suspected, or confirmed as having COVID-19?

Has our employer consulted with union representatives, including Health and Safety Representatives, union delegates and workers about coronavirus risks and the plan to manage and support workers?

Does our workplace have a culture that encourages workers to take sick leave when they are sick?

Are good physical distancing measures applied?

If shared, are workstations cleaned and disinfected in between use?

Is all shared furniture, tools and equipment cleaned and disinfected in between users?

Does everyone have easy access to hand washing facilities with soap and water and other products such as alcohol-based hand sanitizer (including time to wash)?

If required, have workers been provided with our own, individual personal protective equipment (PPE) and trained on how to apply and use them? For example, disposable face masks?



Tax Time

ADVICE FOR UNION MEMBERS

Tax time is coming! Here's some important advice from your Union to make sure you're getting the best deal.

1/ UNION DUES ARE FULLY TAX DEDUCTIBLE

Your Union dues will lower the tax you pay or increase your refund. Make sure to include your yearly Union Dues in your tax return so you don't miss out.

2/ IF YOU'RE LODGING YOURSELF, YOU'LL NEED YOUR MYGOV ACCOUNT AND PASSWORD

MyGov is a login system that allows you to access to ATO's online services. From here you can lodge your own tax return. Visit my.gov.au to get started.

3/ YOU MAY NOT RECEIVE AN ANNUAL SUMMARY DOCUMENT FROM YOUR EMPLOYER.

From last year, information on your on income, tax and superannuation is sent to the ATO – and automatically filled in on your tax return.

4/ COVID-19 PAYMENTS

Depending on your circumstances, you may have received payments from your employer that are not your usual wages. Generally, payments for leave or a temporary stand-down are treated the same as your wages. You will declare them as income and your employer should have withheld tax on those payments on your behalf – just as they do with your wages.

If you've been made redundant, your genuine redundancy payment will be tax-free. Accrued leave payments can either be taxed normally or taxed at a lower rate. Severance pay and other payments are usually taxed at a lower rate.

More information is available on the ATO website, or through your accountant.

If you've been working from home, some expenses can also be claimed as deductions.

STICKING TOGETHER MEANS A BETTER DEAL!

Already there have been hundreds of examples of members standing together to negotiate better outcomes than otherwise would have happened if they were not organised and had not acted collectively. Here are just a few examples:

SOUTH PACIFIC LAUNDRIES - JOB KEEPER PAYMENTS

Most of the full-time workers on site had been forced to drop back to just 8-12 hours per week.

A petition signed by 33 workers convinced the company to commence the \$1500 JobKeeper payments upfront and get reimbursed from the government later.

ROLL BACK OF WAGE INCREASE FOUGHT OFF AT AKD

Members at AKD in South Australia were facing a company request for a deferral of a 2.5% wage increase due in July. After consultation with the Union AKD withdrew from their attempt to vary the Agreement and members received their increase.

The union will work with the company to mitigate the impact of the tough operating environment on members.

JELDWEN BACKS DOWN FROM RIGHT OF ENTRY RESTRICTIONS

South Australian members said "enough is enough" when the multi-national sought to exploit the health crisis to deny access of union officials to workplaces.

Eventually, through the power of unity the dispute was resolved with the company agreeing to site access at all four sites Trend, Regency, Corinthian and Stegbar.



**WORKERS AT CORINTHIAN TOOK A STAND
AGAINST ANTI-UNION BEHAVIOUR**

TCF OUTWORKERS ASSERT THEIR RIGHTS

Textile Clothing and Footwear outworkers are some of the most vulnerable workers in society as they are working isolated, and often do not receive information or assistance from their employers.

The Outwork Outreach team held a well-attended zoom (videoconferencing) meeting of outworkers, presented in Vietnamese, allowing the outworkers to engage with others and share their concerns.

With the assistance of the Union, outworkers are asserting their rights and most of the employers subsequently applied for JobKeeper and continued paying the outworkers.

AH BEARD WORKERS BACK TO FULL SHIFTS

AH Beard sites in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria cut hours to a 4-day week for 2 weeks in April. Workers stood together and leveraged their power and with the support of the Union worked hard to get the company to agree to go back to full hours in May.

A big welcome to new AH Beard members who joined to help take up the fight. In unity there is strength and by staying strong, workers will be ready to fight any unfair practice the company tries to implement in the future.

SOLARIS TRIES TO STALL EBA NEGOTIATION, UNION FIGHTS BACK

Some employers are always looking for excuses to not negotiate with members.

Solaris (producing bulk toilet paper, paper hand towels, facial tissues, commercial wipes and dispenser systems) is booming thanks to members. Despite this, the company refused to resume bargaining for a new Enterprise Agreement on the grounds that they were "too busy". The Commissioner ruled in favour of the Union and ordered Solaris to meet with the Union and resume bargaining on 11 June. This has occurred.



Workers at Reid Bros timber have joined up to fight back against the Victorian Government's stupid plan

TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER: ONE IN ALL IN

Workers join unions for several reasons: to get a fairer deal at work, to support their workmates and to protect their jobs, livelihoods and their families. There has never been a better time for workers to join up and become CFMEU members.

A mass meeting at **Portland Pine Products** in Heywood saw Wes unanimously endorsed by all Members to represent their interests. Wes' first action as delegate was to sign up six new members.




Reid Brothers Timber have been operating a sawmill at Yarra Junction since 1940. The workers there have recently joined up to the Union to fight against the Victorian Government's stupid plan to shut down the native industry and battle for their jobs and their communities. They realise that everyone getting on board and unity will be the key to success.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that over 250 members have joined the CFMEU Manufacturing Division online this year? Together and with everyone on board we are stronger, so why not ask any of your workmates who aren't members to get on board? They can get started through membership.cfmeu.org.au/join/manufacturing or by putting their camera on their mobile phone over this symbol and following the prompts.





THE CFMEU MANUFACTURING DIVISION, FIGHTING FOR EVERY SINGLE JOB

The CFMEU Manufacturing Division has been at the forefront of the fight to save and protect jobs. We know that governments have levers available to them that they can pull to lessen the impact on workers and communities of this economic slump. But we need them to commit to keeping supports in place where required, stimulate the economy and make sure that Australian made products are opted for instead of cheap and often dumped and dodgy imports from places like China.

JOBKEEPER

Following a huge union campaign the Government put in place the JobKeeper wage subsidy program for eligible businesses and workers. Around 844,000 businesses have accessed JobKeeper, delivering payments to 3.5 million workers.

Although far from being a perfect scheme, it has helped keep thousands of CFMEU Manufacturing members in work or with a wage.

A disaster for workers and the economy would be if the Government arbitrarily removed supports like JobKeeper without having regard for what was happening in different sectors of the economy and in different regions and communities.

At the time of publishing, the support is due to finish at the end of September, while extra support for the unemployed in the form of JobSeeker is due to end then too.

A union campaign for the Government to support jobs and workers including through an extension of these supports where needed is already in full swing and must escalate.

STEMMING THE SLUMP IN HOUSING STARTS

Housing starts are forecasted to be just half this year what they normally are without significant government investment in the sector. Sawmilling and building products and furniture manufacturing jobs rely heavily on the domestic house building market.

In April, members and officials of the Green Triangle district were amongst the first to call for Government investment in social housing realising that demand was falling for sawn timber and other wood products.

Members of the NSW District at Tumut, Tumbarumba, Narooma, Eden and Bombala sought commitments from candidates at the Eden-Monaro by-election following the inadequate government HomeBuilder in housing starts package, which even if taken up will only help reduce the shortfall by a fraction.

Members asked that candidates commit to fight in Canberra for Government investment in social housing to stimulate housing starts and requiring that the timber and building products used will be Australian made.

LOCAL JOBS, LOCAL CONTENT

The Union welcomes measures that governments are committing to increasing construction activity and is calling for more announcements but also calling for requirements for Australian manufactured product to be mandated.

Assistant Secretary Leo Skourdoumbis warned in a submission to the Victorian Government that the absence of measures to ensure local content would risk further large losses of jobs and capabilities in the building products and materials manufacturing industry.

The Union has been joined by employers such as Viridian, Jacaranda, Southern Star Windows, Solo Glass and Schiavello in trying to get the Government to act. Politicians will need to hear from members at those firms and others that they need to act to safeguard jobs.

CALLING ON GOVERNMENTS TO BRING FORWARD TCF CONTRACTS AND BUY LOCALLY MANUFACTURED TCF PRODUCTS

The local Textile Clothing and Footwear manufacturing industry has been particularly hard hit by a downturn in consumer spending and subsequently the downturn in retail sales.

Despite early indications from government that local TCF manufacturers would be assisted to pivot to produce medical Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), this support has been limited and many government departments and businesses have decided to import the product instead of buying locally.

That fight continues and the next battlefield is uniforms and general PPE.

Members are fighting hard to ensure that Governments change their approach by bringing government contracts forward and ensuring that contracts are delivered by suppliers who engage local manufacturers in order to save jobs and assist the industry's recovery.

Picture (in header): A worker at Nobody Denim makes scrubs for the Royal Melbourne Hospital. The Factory previously produced jeans only but now up to 20 new sewing machines will be installed to produce medical isolation gowns.



IT HAS BEEN BUSINESS AS USUAL FOR THE CFMEU MANUFACTURING DIVISION INDUSTRIAL TEAM, ORGANISERS AND WORKPLACE REPRESENTATIVES WHO HAVE ASSISTED IN THE RECOVERY OF WAGES AND THE WINNING OF COMPENSATION FOR MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN UNFAIRLY TREATED. SOME RECENT WINS BY THE UNION FOR MEMBERS ARE OUTLINED BELOW:

UNDERPAYMENT RECTIFICATIONS:

- Members at a shower screen manufacturer received **\$4,500 each** in backpay
- Members at a laundry received **\$1000-\$2000 each** in backpay
- Members working for a labour hire company received a collective **\$20,000** underpayment rectifications
- A member at an auto glass company received **\$2800** in backpay
- A member at a post manufacturer received over **\$1000** backpay
- A member received **\$200** in back pay after being wrongly classified as a trainee
- A member at a sawmill received over **\$30,000** in unpaid statutory entitlements

UNPAID SUPER

- Members at a sawmill collectively received over **\$100,000** in unpaid super
- Members at a laundry collectively received **\$90,000** in unpaid super
- A TCF worker received **\$3,700**

COMPENSATION

- A member at a window manufacturer received over **\$65,000** in dismissal settlements
- A member in the fashion industry received **\$55,000** compensation for workplace harassment
- A worker at a door manufacturer received over **\$40,000** for unfair dismissal and workers compensation
- A member in the glazing industry received a **\$16,000** workers compensation settlement
- A member in the glass manufacturing industry received a **\$11,000** settlement following unlawful dismissal
- A member at a kitchen manufacturer received **\$3,000** compensation for unfair dismissal

VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT MUST END TIMBER INDUSTRY CHAOS

The Victorian Government's handling of the native forest timber industry has been a disgrace. The Government's 'plan' for the industry, unveiled last November, is stupid, naive, and irresponsible.

We said when the plan was announced that it was a dud and we have been proven right on several fronts. Now, timber workers and communities are suffering because of the chaos in the industry which is being made worse by the lack of a fair and viable industry roadmap. This is the situation we face:

- The summer fires burnt many coupes due to be harvested and salvage and recovery harvesting has not been properly rolled out.
- The fires and loopholes in the Code of Practice for Timber Harvesting have been exploited by opponents of the industry in courts resulting in contractors and their crews being ordered out of forest coupes which are unburnt and were due for harvesting.
- Workplace invaders are running amok in coupes putting contractors and their crews at risk and slowing down harvesting.

This means that many contractors and their crews, already reeling from the fires, have had their contracts with VicForests torn up, have been stood down or had their productivity hampered. This has put severe financial strain on them and their families.

Already we are receiving reports that sawmills are facing a shortfall in log supply because of the above.

As part of the next stage of the fightback CFMEU organisers will be seeking feedback from members for a proposed 'log of claims' to take to the Victorian Government.

The Government must end the fiasco and bring back some certainty to the industry and the workers and communities which rely on it.

The proposed log of claims recognises the challenges that the industry faced even prior to this last nine months of catastrophic blow after blow in the form of the policy, the fires, court actions and workplace invasions.

KEY PROPOSED ELEMENTS OF THE LOG OF CLAIMS:

That the Victorian Government:

1. Commit to ongoing native forest harvesting: No cessation of native forest industry in 2030.
2. Close legal loopholes being exploited by opponents of the timber industry to stop harvesting.
3. Take a hard-line against illegal forest workplace invasions that put contractors and their crews at risk.
4. Provide immediate assistance and security (fair contracts) to forest contractors and crews.
5. Recommit to jobs at the Maryvale pulp and paper mill.
6. Provide information and options to the industry about future sawlog volumes from State Forests.
7. Provide assistance and compensation packages for any workers, contractors and sawmillers who exit industry which are at least equivalent (benchmarked against inflation and cost of living increases) to those delivered in 2003 by the Bracks/ Brumby Victorian Labor Government in the Our Forests, Our Future timber industry restructure.

MEMBERS CHURN OUT PAPER PRODUCTS DURING PANDEMIC

As Australia went into pandemic lockdown and tissue product sales soared, with Woolworths alone doubling sales of toilet rolls to 20.5M rolls in a week, one sector of the Manufacturing Division were busy doing their best to ensure Australians had all the paper products they needed.

Although toilet & tissue production was already a 24/7 operation, our members stepped up to the plate in an uncertain and rapidly changing environment and continued to work, getting as much product out of the door in the shortest timeframes possible.

A wide range of paper based products are manufactured in Australia. These include toilet paper, tissues, paper towel and feminine hygiene and incontinence products from leading brands. Union members make most of the cartons you buy your eggs in as well! CFMEU Manufacturing members also make products for the ground-breaking Victorian 'Free Sanitary Pads & Tampons in Schools' project currently underway.

**THESE BRANDS ARE ALL MADE BY CFMEU
MANUFACTURING DIVISION MEMBERS RIGHT
HERE IN AUSTRALIA. SO NEXT TIME YOU ARE
BUYING YOUR PAPER PRODUCTS CONSIDER
LOCAL MANUFACTURING FIRST AND SUPPORT
AUSTRALIAN JOBS – CFMEU MEMBERS' JOBS.**

