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# CFMEU

NOV

MANUFACTURING

2020



**THE CORONAVIRUS  
JOBS CRISIS**

# THE CORONAVIRUS JOBS CRISIS



## A MESSAGE FROM CFMEU MANUFACTURING DIVISION NATIONAL SECRETARY MICHAEL O'CONNOR

The Australian Government's Budget shows there will be continued tough times ahead for Australian workers.

It finds that COVID-19 has had a shocking impact on Australia's community and economy.

This year, for the first-time ever official figures found more than 1 million Australians unemployed and looking for work.

A recent report by Anglicare Australia found that there were 106 jobseekers for every entry level job.

For manufacturing workers, the pandemic has hit particularly hard.

The number of Australians employed in manufacturing has collapsed to its lowest level on record with the economy shedding 50,000 manufacturing jobs since the start of the crisis despite many manufacturing businesses accessing JobKeeper wage subsidy programs.

In July, 246,000 manufacturing jobs were being supported by JobKeeper representing about 30% of the remaining manufacturing workforce.

The JobKeeper wage subsidy was reduced to \$1200 per fortnight for full time workers and \$750 for part time workers (under 20 hrs per week) at the end of September. It is scheduled to reduce again to \$1000 per fortnight/\$650 per fortnight at January 4 2021 and cease completely on 28 March.

The forecast of a recovery relies on an assumption that a successful COVID-19 vaccine will be rolled out across the population by late next year, a goal that is far from guaranteed.

All this means that we need to fight for every job and stick together.

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- MICHAEL O'CONNOR

# SLOGGING ON

IN THE FACE OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWNS

Many CFMEU Manufacturing members in Metropolitan Melbourne were able to continue working through the lockdown as they work in companies which are recognised as providing essential services such as paper and sanitary product manufacturing, building products, mask manufacturing etc. Others had the opportunity to return to work in the first step out of restrictions. All members have done a great job in difficult circumstances.



Members at Knauf Plasterboard



Mask production at Denim 101



Senior Assistant National Secretary Leo Skourdoubis with members at Koala Furniture



Members at O'Brien Glass



EVERYTHING  
IS GOING UP

# EXCEPT

# WAGES

Even prior to the COVID 19 pandemic Australia had suffered a long period of record low wage growth.

Australia has faced record low wage increases under the Abbott, Turnbull, and Morrison Governments.

Recent GDP figures showed the share of national income going to workers is the lowest since 1964.

Wages declined in the height of July of this year and are forecast to grow by only 1.25% in the next financial year starting in July 2021.

In Australia wages are generally set out in an Award or an agreement.

## Awards

Each year Award wages are adjusted following the annual wage review. Earlier this year the Fair Work Commission announced a 1.75% increase to minimum wages to kick in at different times depending on your award.

The union movement puts formal submissions into the review arguing for fair wage increases whereas business

groups put in submissions usually asking for low wage increases, wage freezes or even cuts to wages like cuts to penalty rates.

Workers on the Textile, Clothing, Footwear and Associated Industries Award, Timber Industry Award, Joinery and Building Trades Award and Manufacturing and Associated Industries and Occupations Award have had to wait until November 1 this year for their pay increase.

Disgracefully, workers on the Dry Cleaning and Laundry Industry Award will have to wait until February 2021 for the increase.

## Agreements

There may be an opportunity to bargain for "above award" wages and conditions with your employer. Bargaining for new agreements is often core business of the union.

Currently officials and delegates are teaming up around the country to bargain for a better deal at work.

**On an award?** For information on current award rates, penalty rates and allowances, and your sector and classification click [here](#) to go the union's 'Award Information Hub'.



GREATER GREEN TRIANGLE DISTRICT ORGANISER TRAVIS LAWSON GIVES BARGAINING REPORT BACK MEETINGS (ONEFORTYONE MT JUBILEE HIGHWAY)

# BOSSES NEVER GIVE OUT PAYRISES UNION MEMBERS WIN THEM

## SOLIDARITY

Members at Solos Glass have been sticking together and their solidarity has seen the company agree to commence a process of interest-based bargaining. This sort of bargaining approach identifies their individual and shared interests, rather than focusing on their positions or log of claims.

Well done to the members and delegates

## BARGAINING OUTCOME

The union is growing stronger at the pulp and paper Mill at Visy Tumut which is steadily leading to increased power at work for union members. Recently members voted up an agreement which locked in wage increases in 2020, 2021 and 2022 with NO cuts to conditions or "trade-offs" and range of better conditions.

## Delegates and shop stewards

Delegates are your union representatives at work. Hundreds of CFMEU Manufacturing delegates are elected by their workmates and provide a vital link between members and organisers and other union structures such as the officials and Committees of Management.



New Delegates at ABMT Textiles Keith and Kim



AKD delegate and New South Wales District President Sharon lobbying NSW Opposition leader in Tumut



New delegate at Viridian Rod meeting with Senior Assistant National Secretary Leo Skourdoumbis



Pete has stood up to be the new delegate at Moyle Benable Timber after his predecessor retired.



## TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER: MEMBERS JOINING THE UNION IN KEY WORKSITES AND SECTORS

The stronger the union is in individual workplaces the more power workers have. "One in all in" and "100% union" is so much more than a slogan, it means that the heavy lifting is not left to too few and better outcomes can be achieved for all.

But even better than a strong union at individual worksites is when whole industries are unionised. It is OK for employers to compete against each other on productivity and innovation but not in a race to the bottom on wages and conditions. Therefore, recruitment in new sites is core business for the union.



The delegate team at Laminex Cheltenham are helping to drive recruitment to strengthen worker power on site.



CFMEU Organiser Matt Blowes with completed membership forms of new members at RM Williams



Members meetin at Akubra where the iconic hats are made by CFMEU members at South Kempsey NSW



A new apprentice is the latest member at Schiavello Group

**Workers at Illawarra Frame and Truss on the NSW South Coast have recently joined the union.**

The workers are already showing amazing strength and unity with improvements to workplace safety and site amenities already won. They continue to exercise their power as they stand together in preparation to improve their rights and conditions at work.



## CFMEU MANUFACTURING

### IN THE COMMUNITY

Looking out for each other at work and outside is now more important than ever.

Union members are often the lifeblood of their communities.

They play key roles as leaders in volunteer fire fighting operations, community emergency management, sporting clubs, charity groups and support services.

We are proud of the contribution that our members make.

CFMEU delegate at Borgs Manufacturing, Anthony ("Skip") along with some other local artists in Mount Gambier have been hard at work beautifying some bland looking stobie poles in the city. The project has been a hit in the community and showcases the talents of the artists.

Anthony is well known throughout the community for his many public artworks and is a great union delegate.

Union members with their employer Asaleo Care, have an ongoing partnership role to support the work of Share the Dignity to provide feminine hygiene products to women who are experiencing homelessness, fleeing domestic violence, and doing it tough.

This year, with COVID-19 impacts biting hard and donations down, Share the Dignity need public donations and support more than ever. And that is when the CFMEU Pulp & Paper members decided to step up, donating a pallet of much needed feminine hygiene products (62,000 individual pieces).

We are also pleased to know that, thanks to Cope Transport, this pallet is already on its way to a remote indigenous community in the NT



CFMEU delegate from Borgs Manufacturing Skip and his fellow artists works in the community have been a hit in Mt Gambier.



CFMEU Manufacturing Division members, make Libra and Tena brand tampons, pads and other products

## GOVERNMENTS MUST DO

### MORE TO STIMULATE

### CONSTRUCTION

A decline in migration to Australia has led to a collapse in new housing starts meaning products made by CFMEU Manufacturing workers like timber products, furniture, mattresses, curtains, blinds, windows and doors have lost a key part of their usual market.

The Australian Government's "Homebuilder" program is proving a bust. There have been 6335 applications for the program (to September) but only 123 applications have received a payment nationwide meaning the program is not big enough and is being rolled out too slowly.

The union will keep fighting for an expansion of government spending on infrastructure and social housing construction and for governments to maximise the benefits from this government spending by buying Australian made and supporting local and union jobs.

## THE TIME FOR GOVERNMENTS TO

### PREFERENCE AUSTRALIAN MADE

### PRODUCTS IS NOW

Many public servants and politicians remain out of step with the Australian people who want State and Federal governments to support local jobs by ensuring that when governments buy, they buy Australian made goods and not imports.

Good secure jobs underpin our communities but too often governments do not support them by spending on imports.

For years, Australian governments have claimed that preferencing local products in government contracts would be against Australia's free trade agreements.

But the union continues to highlight that there is enough flexibility in the agreements to support local jobs. These flexibilities are designed to be used in the sort of jobs crisis we are facing currently.

The question for Australian governments is if they are not going to use the levers available to them in procurement to support jobs now, why not?

The time for Government to buy Australian is now and the only barrier to doing so is a lack of political will.





## ECA CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF TACKLING EXPLOITATION

Ethical Clothing Australia (ECA) is marking 20 years of tackling sweatshops and exploitation in Australia's Textile Clothing and Footwear (TCF) Industry.

The role of the TCF Union (Manufacturing Division of the CFMEU) is central to ECA's work as the union undertakes the auditing and compliance work and worker outreach activities.

We have made a big difference by making some of the biggest brands and labels accountable for workers' pay and conditions in their supply chains, changing the lives of thousands of workers in the predominately female, often non-English speaking workforce.

But more needs to be done.

Wage theft, super theft, appalling Work Health and Safety practices and modern slavery remain widespread in some parts of the industry and outworkers in the unaccredited supply chains remain exploited.

The economic pressures inflicted on communities by COVID-19 risks resulting in the escalation of exploitation in the outworker sector as families suffering economic pain and a lack of job opportunities look for alternative sources of income.



## FORESTRY WORKERS RECOGNISED

### AS KEY TO FIGHTING FIRES

Earlier this year we highlighted the role that forestry workers played in preparing for and fighting the summer bushfires. Recently the Independent inquiry into the Victorian bushfires found:

- The timber industry provides support to fire agencies before, but especially during and after bushfires.
- Much road and track maintenance funding comes from haulage fees from VicForests, which will be lost if native timber harvesting ceases.
- VicForests provides a core workforce and specialist equipment that fire agencies have come to rely upon for fuel management, road, and track maintenance, and during clean-up after major bushfires.
- Forest workers possess a vital skill set, knowledge base and operational experience in forest landscapes
- Forest workers' contribution has also made forests safer and easier to access for all Victorians.

These findings make Bunnings' decision to stop selling native forest timber and the Victorian Government's decision to end native harvesting by 2030 even more ridiculous. The union will keep up the fight to ensure both decisions are reversed.



CFMEU Members and officials had a message for Bunnings management in a solidarity protest in Launceston, a message confirmed by recent findings into bushfire response in Victoria

Meanwhile, in NSW, Bushfire Emergency Citations have recently been presented to Forestry Corporation staff in Coffs Harbour and Grafton acknowledging their contribution to the 2019-20 firefighting efforts.

Forestry Corporation engaged a range of contractors to support the firefighting efforts, including heavy plant operators.

Not only do forestry and timber workers have the key skills and expertise in forest firefighting and particularly using heavy equipment to create roads, fire breaks and containment lines, due to the scale of the fires last season they were more than ever before in direct protection of homes and communities.

## POLITICIANS WHO GET 15%

### SUPER SAY YOU DO NOT DESERVE

### MORE THAN 9.5%

The superannuation guarantee is 9.5 % of a person's wage. But this is legislated to rise to 10 % next July, with follow-up staggered increases to 12 per cent by 2025 as below.

Super increases due	Percentage
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022	10
July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023	10.5
July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024	11
July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025	11.5
July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026	12

The problem is that some Liberal politicians are arguing for the legislated superannuation increases to be scrapped.

Scott Morrison's Minister for Superannuation Jane Hume has not backed in the increases saying that a political decision will have to be made and that increase might be "irresponsible"

This is despite the fact the politicians, including her enjoy 15% super on their salaries which are all over \$200,000 per year.

That they think a modest superannuation increase from 9.5%-12% over six years for workers is "irresponsible" whilst they are receiving 15% super on their big wages paid by taxpayers shows how out of touch they are.



## **SOUTH COAST NSW/ NORTH EAST**

## **VICTORIA SOFTWOOD INDUSTRY-**

## **WE NEED A PLAN!**

The Australian, New South Wales and Victorian governments need to step up and do more to protect jobs and communities like Tumut, Wagga Wagga, Tumbarumba, Myrtleford, and Benalla.

The softwood resource was decimated by the summer bushfires but there seems to be a lack of a plan for workers and communities when the salvage harvest operations finish.

Big River Timber have made a devastating announcement that they will be closing the Wagga Wagga site and the union is working with members on their options.

A major processor, Hyne has called for \$10 million to be provided by the NSW Government and \$18.9 for the Australian Government to assist in the freight to the mill of Australian saw logs destined for China to their mill in Tumbarumba to help fill future shortfalls caused by the fires.

These requests have so far fallen on deaf ears.

We will continue to work with our members to secure the access to logs that helps support their job. However, in the face of unprecedented challenges, governments must stop reacting and have a plan with practical support for timber workers and timber towns.



A burnt-out forest near Tumbarumba

## **BEEN INJURED AT WORK**

## **AND/OR NEED WORKPLACE**

## **RELATED LEGAL SUPPORT?**

If you have been injured in the workplace or because of your work, you may be entitled to claim compensation for your pain and suffering, loss of income, medical expenses and more.

Likewise, if you have been treated unlawfully by your employer you are entitled to support and rectification.

It is important that you contact the union at your first opportunity. We may advise you to do several things to reduce risk about compensation and cover claims being denied.

A key benefit of union membership is that we can provide and facilitate specialist representation for you when you need it most.

Where necessary, the union will engage external legal services for Workcover advice and assistance on workplace legal disputes to make sure you are appropriately supported and represented.

## **REACHING OUT**

## **TO OUTWORKERS**

Some outworkers in the TCF sector in Australia work long hours and do not receive the legal Award rate of pay. Sometimes they are paid by piece, which means there is significant pressure to work extensive hours to produce more garments.

Outworkers from around Australia are being invited to call the Compliance Team from the TCF Union, over a three-day phone campaign.

This is a good opportunity for outworkers to find out about their legal entitlements and share their story. This can be done anonymously if desired by the outworker.

**Campaign Date: 25th, 26th, 27th November 2020**

**Time: 9am – 7pm**

### **KEY CONTACTS:**

- **Elizabeth Macpherson: 0418 770273**
- **Nguyet Nguyen: 0418 386 928**

## UNION DRIVES TEXTILE CLOTHING

## & FOOTWEAR VICTORIAN

## GOVERNMENT VIRTUAL

## ROUNDTABLE

At the initiative of TCF National Secretary Jenny Kruschel, the Roundtable was held by the Victorian Government in August and attended by key employers and distributors in the Victorian Industry including Blue Gum Clothing Co P/L, ABMT Textiles, Nobody Denim, Bruck & Australian Textile Mills, Qualitops, Textor, Topknot Fabrics, Glanda International, Flicker's Australia, Humphrey Law, Vince Clothing, The Ark, Textile House, Bassike, Wilson Fabrics, Stewart & Heaton and Geelong Textiles Australia.

The Local Jobs First Commissioner summarised several key themes from the meeting including:

- Victorian manufacturers make quality products and can be competitive compared to imports.
- Support exists for the development by government of an industry development or strategy plan.
- Disruptions to the supply chain brought about by COVID-19 virus has refocused attention on the issue of sovereign risk.
- Greater local procurement by governments is needed to sustain the industry.



TCF National Secretary Jenny Kruschel was instrumental in the holding of a Government-Industry roundtable to save and grow jobs in the Textile Clothing and Footwear Industry.

- Ethical Clothing Australia accreditation is viewed favourably by consumers
- An urgent short-term use of procurement policy is vital to assist the TCF industry hard hit because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was agreed that the Roundtable should become a regular forum held to discuss issues impacting on the TCF industry and that these forums be co-ordinated by a working party comprised of government, business, and union representatives.

The union will consider trying to replicated this "Union-Government-Business" Roundtable engagement approach in other sectors such as:

- timber,
- glass,
- doors and windows,
- carpets,
- curtain and blinds,
- mattresses &
- furniture

and for TCF with other Governments including the Australian Government.

## A SPIKE IN TEXTILE CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR IMPORTS A

## CAUSE FOR CONCERN FOR LOCAL JOBS AND WORKERS IN CHINA

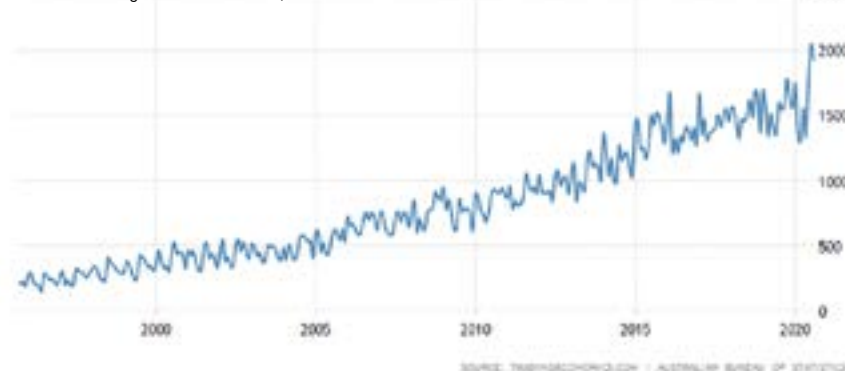
The union is investigating record imports (by value) of Textile Clothing and Footwear products into Australia in the months of July (highest amount by value of imports on record) and August (second highest amount by value of imports on record)

Although imports are now an established part of the market it is important that they are controlled going forward so that local producers are given an opportunity to bounce back from the COVID-19.

The bulk of imports come from China and there are renewed concerns about working conditions, especially forced labour camps which many clothing brands have been linked to in western China.

Virtually the entire fashion industry is complicit in Uighur forced labour according to a Coalition of more than 180 human rights groups.

Source: tradingeconomics.com | Australian Bureau of Statistics



Imports to Australia of Textile Clothing and Footwear products spiked in July and August of this year as China's manufacturing commenced again following their COVID-19 lockdown earlier this year

The union will leave no stone unturned in exploring options to ensure that local manufacturers are provided an opportunity to compete on a level playing field. We will hone in on the purchasing practices of governments and fight to force them to procure Australian made

products wherever possible and look to ensure local jobs are better defended against imports through the Anti-Dumping system and the Modern Slavery Act.





The Industrial team have been hard at work as usual making sure members are receiving what they are entitled to.

## **UNDERPAYMENT RECTIFICATION**

### **AND LEAVE**

- \$100,000 in unpaid super to 7 of our members is being paid back
- \$15,000 in back pay for 6 members is being paid back
- Members benefited when a company was forced to meet its obligations under its EBA and offer workers a choice of a role change or a redundancy package when their job position changed.
- Incorrect leave accruals during a JobKeeper stand-down fixed

## **UNFAIR DISMISSAL COMPENSATION**

Including payments to individual members of:

- \$16,000
- \$13,000
- \$7,340
- \$4,500
- \$4,000

In addition, sometimes dismissal can be overturned or converted into redundancy and references and record of services can be agreed.

## **NON-MONETARY WINS**

- Removal of warning letters
- Dismissals revoked
- The ceasing of unfair and unlawful disciplinary processes.

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A BETTER TIME TO**

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