

Staff at the Coalface

19 May 2015

ARRANGE A VISIT AT YOUR MINE SITE

As you would be aware, we represent members across the coal fields in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia and Tasmania. Each year we try and get out to a range of different mine sites. The sites that we are bargaining at, or have significant disputes at, are the mines that we visit the most, but we also try and get out to mines where we haven't been for a while, or new mines where we haven't been at all.

Under current legislation, we are entitled to enter mine sites, irrespective of whether the management of the mine gives permission. To meet with Staff at your mine, we are required to provide the correct paperwork at least 24 hours in advance and then we are entitled to meet with Staff before or after their shift or as a 'meal break'.

We are able to meet with our members or those who are eligible to be our members. We find that the most common reason that Staff do not join CSOA is because they've never been asked to. Our delegates and contacts perform a vital role in introducing CSOA to Staff and spreading important information, but we know that it's also important that we meet with Staff directly from time to time. With Staff redundancy entitlements under threat, it's important that Staff get informed and work together.

This year we've held meetings with Staff at: Appin, Wambo, Moolarben, Ulan, Springvale, Myuna, Clarence, Mandalong, North Goonyella, Carborough Downs, Glenden, BMA, Drayton, Wollongong Coal, Bloomfield, Metropolitan, Tahmoor, Blakefield South, with others scheduled to be held in the next couple of weeks.

If you would like an Organiser to arrange to meet with you and your colleagues, please contact us on (02) 9269 0688.

RISK ASSESS YOUR REDUNDANCY

As written about in our last edition of *Staff at the Coalface*, the Fair Work Commission recently handed down its decision which removed the discriminatory Age 60 clause on retrenchment pay from the Black Coal Mining Industry Award 2010. The removal of this clause on retrenchment pay by the Fair Work Commission ends the long standing dispute with Centennial, giving certainty to older Staff that they will be treated the same as everyone else if they are retrenched.

In these proceedings, the Coal Mining Industry Employer Group who represent every employer in the coal mining industry, argued to change your long standing safety net entitlement to retrenchment pay. The coal employers argued in the Commission that your industry retrenchment pay should be capped at 9 years of service. This cap

would mean that the maximum Award safety net payment of retrenchment pay for any Staff or Deputy, regardless of length of service, would be 18 weeks.

The Fair Work Commission concluded that there was not enough evidence before them to persuade them to “take the axe”, to your safety net redundancy scheme but left the door open for the employers to put together a case at a later date.

WHAT DO YOU STAND TO LOSE?

Since our last edition of *Staff at the Coalface*, we’ve been contacted by many of our members who are concerned that the wording in their contract or agreement may make them vulnerable if there is a change in Company Policy or the Award.

As a first step, you and your colleagues need to complete a two minute online survey to risk assess your redundancy entitlement. [Click here](#) to complete your risk assessment.

As mentioned above, we’re also available to run meetings at your workplace, if this is something that you and your colleagues would like more information on.

With so much uncertainty in the industry at the moment, there has never been a more important time for Staff to be in their Union. [Click here](#) to join with other Staff to protect your industry entitlements.

WHAT TO DO WHEN FACING A DISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION

We have seen a rise in recent months of members facing serious disciplinary issues. At times members have not realised the importance of getting advice and assistance until after the first meeting and by that stage the company has often asked many questions and gathered most of the information. Nothing is ever ‘off the record’ in these circumstances!

It is important to get in contact with us as soon as practicable, so that we can guide you through the process and give you the best assistance possible.

Most importantly:

- **Don’t go to a meeting alone** - If your employer asks you to come to a meeting to discuss your work performance or a conduct issue it is important that you attend. But, you should not go alone. You have a right to ask to postpone a meeting for a reasonable amount of time until a support person or representative can attend with you.
- **Call your Industrial Officer/Organiser** on (02) 9269 0688 as soon as possible for confidential advice and assistance, or your site delegate where there is one.
- **Keep a record.** Make sure you have a copy of any relevant documents such as emails, warning letters, performance reviews,

policies and your work contract. Taking note of times and details of relevant conversations in a diary can also be helpful.

- **Be candid and upfront** with your Industrial Officer and provide them with complete and accurate information so that they can give you the best assistance possible.

Please take these things seriously and get advice immediately.

REMINDER – CONFERENCE SATURDAY 13 JUNE 2015

CHANGING AND CHALLENGING TIMES AHEAD FOR COAL - WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR FUTURE?

Did you forget to register for the Conference in Brisbane on 13th June?

This will be an exceptional one day industry conference where you can discuss the current state of the Coal Mining industry, with a focus on practical steps that Staff and Deputies can take to ensure that your current conditions are consolidated and your job security maximised in these changing times.

Just call us on 02 9269 0688 and register for the conference over the phone. Don't forget to let us know your preferred travel arrangements and any dietary requirements for the dinner as well.

We look forward to seeing you there.