



A big year for Collieries' Staff and Officials

22 December 2016

While there has been a temporary reprieve this year with a higher than expected coal price, there remains the spectre of closing coal mines and lay-offs. This year Staff with their union saw off several attempts from the employers to shift their risk onto their own employees and drive down conditions in the industry.

At the start of the year, Staff at Austar, Able and Ashton were faced with defending their employment conditions. Their employer, Yancoal, had set up a front company, YMS, and offered Staff new contracts that excluded many of their conditions, with the threat of termination if they didn't sign. Staff worked together, resisted Yancoal's threats of termination and secured a better deal.

Unfortunately, this year has seen many companies restructuring, with significant job losses at several sites. In these circumstances CSOA has demanded that Staff be consulted with, to try to minimise the number of job losses and to ensure that opportunities for redeployment were fully explored.

At Mount Arthur mine, when a restructure was announced and BHP was not genuinely consulting, CSOA took BHP to the Fair Work Commission and secured a fairer process. BHP appealed this, but CSOA won the case and has set an important precedent in the industry.

At Appin mine, there were significant Staff reductions, but through CSOA's involvement, some jobs were saved by pushing the company to allow voluntary redundancies for some positions, which allowed other Staff to transfer into new roles. South32 used the threat of redundancy to push Staff to accept significant pay cuts, but the Appin Staff agreement which underpinned Staff contracts, ensured that all other Appin Staff conditions were not downgraded.

It was your Staff union that led the response to the employers' attack on redundancy entitlements. Not only did we run a strong legal case in the Fair Work Commission demonstrating why the coal industry is unique and why the existing entitlements are crucial for Staff, but we also organised community petitions and market stalls in places like Moranbah, to show the employers that the community is behind Staff in saying 'no' to any reductions in entitlements.

More widely we have concentrated on locking the full three weeks per year of service redundancy into Staff contracts and enterprise agreements. This has been the case with some Peabody sites, South32, Centennial deputies and we hope to be able to announce soon that a major employer who we've been in discussions with, has guaranteed the full uncapped redundancy in all Staff contracts.

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**Collieries'
Staff and Officials
Association**

In 2016, the association supported many of our members facing safety investigations, disciplinary meetings and unfair dismissals. In 2017, completing bargaining and continuing to lock in full redundancy rights at other sites will be key.

Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry into Black Lung

As mentioned in our most recent Staff at the Coal Face, your Staff Union appeared before the Inquiry into the re-emergence of Black Lung in Queensland on 12 December 2016. The discussions with parliamentarians were productive, and we look forward to working with the Committee further in the lead up to their final report on 12 April 2017. The transcript of your Staff Union's appearance before the inquiry can be found [here](#) from page 17.

UNION OFFICE CHRISTMAS CLOSEDOWN

The Collieries' Staff and Officials Association Team wishes you and your family a Merry Christmas and a very safe and Happy New Year. Thank you for your support of the association throughout the year.

The Collieries' Staff and Officials Association Office will be closed for Christmas and the New Year from 5pm Thursday 22nd of December 2016, and will re-open on Tuesday the 3rd of January 2017. In the event of an emergency, you can contact Adam Guy on 0458 171 288.

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Collieries Staff and Officials Association. Level 1, 491 Kent Street, Sydney, NSW 2000
T (02) 9269 0688 • F (02) 9269 0611 • W www.collieries.org.au • E infocsd@professionalsaustralia.org.au