

fsu@work

.insurance fsu member magazine

SIGN UP AND
GO PLACES

See insert



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July 2004



AMP Parramatta
Reps get organised

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S MESSAGE



Photographer: James Lauritz

Paul Schroder

The strength and commitment of union members across the insurance industry is never more evident than in that group of people who take on the role of the FSU Rep in their workplace.

This edition of FSU@Work is jammed packed with examples of the work they are taking on and of the gains they and their members have made. Their activities ensure successful outcomes for insurance members.

So knowing that it can be done, we must take up the challenge to encourage the development and support for Reps and activists in all insurance areas.

Industry perspective

FSU is active on the broader industry front.

We have surveyed members, written to employers and are lobbying politicians on many matters to ensure members' rights are protected, and that employment opportunities in Australia are maintained.

We take a further look at the global trends towards sending jobs overseas in this edition.

Federal election

The 2004 federal election represents a significant choice for Australia in determining what type of society we want for ourselves and for our children.

FSU has been canvassing members to gauge which issues they are most concerned about and to help provide information on the policies of all the political parties. A report on what members are saying can be found on page 8.

Most importantly, I would like to acknowledge your efforts and encourage your continued involvement in helping make Insurance, the finance sector and our community a better place.

Cover: AMP Reps. Back row from left: Xavier Estaban, Pat Knott and Abby Wehbe. Front row from left: Jordy Bhaskar, Geoff Reid, Fiona Brunt, Bec Hannaford and Shea Williams-Philpott.

Photographer: Urs Bucher

Photo supplied by the FSU



Tom Murphy (son) and Sam O'Connell (nephew) of IAG HR manager hang out in the colourful carer's room.

Express lane

IAG AND FSU TAKING CARE OF CHILDREN

One of the initiatives of the IAG Enterprise Agreement is the establishment of a joint work/life taskforce.

IAG and FSU Representatives will oversee a range of projects relating to hours of work, flexible working arrangements and other 'life friendly' initiatives such as job share and child care. FSU is pushing for a taskforce to be established as soon as possible.

The taskforce will build on work/life provisions already established such as the creation of a Carer's Room in the Perth workplace designed "to allow employees to continue working whilst caring for their immediate family members when normal day-care arrangements have broken down, or when due to a minor illness a child is unable to attend child care or school", as stated in IAG's policy.

So far, it has been widely used, and IAG are planning to put one in all major sites over the next financial year.

FSU REPS TAKE CHARGE



Michael Duke (middle) and his workmates set their sights on raising Union awareness.

"Recently the Perth Transaction Business Centre was overtaken by the FSU Reps" says IAG Rep Michael Duke. "It was a civil take over, with Reps distributing gift bags, full of useful goodies for all FSU members."

Photo supplied by the FSU

The idea was to show thanks to those who support the FSU and to promote awareness of the Union among non-members. It was also a good opportunity to show a united front, with staff and reps sporting FSU security tags and displaying FSU mouse pads.

"We also took the opportunity to increase membership by promoting our TV Competition for referring new members. As per the photos, you can see that my charming good looks seduced a few new members!

"Overall the day was great, however I still believe the TBC has an apathetic view of the FSU and how it can help. We will need to look at ways of changing our image and becoming more proactive in membership recruitment and negotiations", said Michael.

NEW OFFICE REPS GEARED UP TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



New office reps Lindsay Horsley (left) and Diane Harrington, work towards ensuring staff rights are respected.

Fresh and raring to go, brand new office reps, Lindsay and Dianne are looking forward to making changes and raising the Union profile at BUPA.

Lindsay Horsley and Diane Harrington have joined the team at the BUPA Australia Head Office in Glenferrie Road, Victoria.

"It's great to be doing something positive," they say. "We're looking forward to letting our colleagues know about the benefits of FSU membership."

Lindsay, who attended the Introductory Reps course in April, says: "The training was very helpful. I now have a better understanding of my role and the part played by Office Reps."

Diane says she's keen to help her colleagues understand exactly what's in their new enterprise agreement. "The agreement contains our conditions of employment; unless we know what's in it, how can we ensure our rights are respected?"

Under the BUPA Australia EA 2003, FSU Office Reps have access to paid training. Other BUPA staff interested in becoming a Rep should contact the FSU Victorian/Tasmanian Branch on (03) 9261 5400.

Photo supplied by the FSU

AMP REPS MAKE THINGS HAPPEN

Photographer: Urs Bucher



As a result of a review of work practices in their department, FSU Reps from AMP Parramatta have been working hard at getting management to take on board their concerns.

“It was time to get organised”, says FSU Rep Pat Knott. “We established a series of contacts from each team to meet and discuss issues from the review that would affect staff”.

“Discussion groups were set up, however after the review was finalised the changes to our area made our work environment more taxing and there were problems with training and targets” Pat says.

Another meeting resolved to write and sign a letter to management outlining their concerns. The action culminated in a large workplace meeting where 90% of full time staff signed the letter and then presented it to management. “Whole teams became Union members enmasse and management listened to and addressed our concerns,” says Pat.

“It’s not about ‘causing trouble’ but being aware of what we as employees are entitled to”, says Rebecca Hannaford.

“It’s great to have a strong support network as sometimes we just don’t feel comfortable speaking to our superiors on our own. Speaking with a union Rep allows you to get a second opinion and also gives you some direction if something needs to be done.

“Since joining the union I have become more aware of those rights and just how powerful the voice of the employee really is.”

FSU Rep Joythi Baskar says: “It’s been fantastic to see the union membership as well as the amount of union Reps at AMP grow so significantly in the past year thanks to the efforts of other union Reps and the FSU. People feel a greater sense of security which is not only a win for the FSU but is also a win for AMP. After all, job security and knowing that you have a united voice in the workplace makes for a more productive, happier and less stressed worker.”

“Being part of the union”, he continues, “enables me to ensure fairness for all is achieved in the workplace. It also means I can speak up for

Photographer: George Bechara



AMP Reps enhance their dispute handling skills at an Advanced Training Course.

people who would otherwise feel a sense of isolation when dealing with issues in the workplace. I love the feeling of being able to make a difference”.

“I’d agree with that”, says Rep Abby Wehbe. “I’m a passionate person who loves to stand up for what’s right which is why I became a Representative.”

FSU REPS ADVANCE THEIR SKILLS

In a move to give Reps, who are already representing FSU members in grievances and dispute handling, some extra support, fifteen Reps from AMP and IAG in NSW participated in the inaugural Advanced Reps Training Course in May.

The course is designed to help Reps deal with resolving member concerns and avoid the need to escalate issues through the Union office.

“I’ve been representing members for some time now but the course was a great opportunity to pick up extra skills in negotiation and advocacy which will benefit the people I have to represent during discussions with management”, said FSU IAG Rep Ngairé Rudolph. Ngairé also says that she is now confident of achieving a win-win outcome with local management and is hoping that this will make her managers get on with the main job of running the business without being sidetracked by issues that can be fixed locally.

With the success of the course, FSU will now roll it out to more Reps who have done the initial introductory two day course and want the advantage of this refresher option.

To find out when the next course in your state is, refer to page 7 of this magazine.

CGU REPS VOTE IN A FAIRER RDO SYSTEM

Hard work and dedication has paid off for the FSU Reps at the CGU Call Centre in La Trobe St, Victoria, who have turned management around and secured a fairer RDO system.

Reps took the staff concerns that RDOs were being lost during annual and sick leave to management after an employee survey showed that a large proportion of people were unhappy with the current system.

The Call Centre was still using the old CGU system of managing RDOs, while the new IAG agreement offers considerably fairer RDO arrangements.

“The RDO issue is one that has affected everyone from CSO’s to team leaders and managers”, says FSU Rep, Mohamed Khalil.

“The existing system is unfair, inflexible, and it contradicts the EBA”, he says. “If an employee was to breach company policy in any way, they would be immediately held accountable. However, if the company chose to ignore the agreement that it is party to, no questions asked. That’s why we need to ensure that we are getting what we are entitled to - a fair and equitable system that gives us the choices in managing our RDO structure”.

The meeting with management resolved that staff would put to vote two options on RDOs. One, to keep the current system or two, to adopt the new system from the IAG agreement. Staff voted for the latter.

“The outcome was a really positive result for all staff”, said FSU Rep Scott Cooper. “The agreed solution for the change back to the original EBA process for RDOs being voted on by CGU staff is really fitting as it was the staff who voted in the EBA originally”.

“Creating a fair and consistent approach to RDOs has really helped raise the profile of the union in the CGU sales and service areas, which is fantastic”, says FSU Rep, Andrew Howard.

A joint memorandum from CGU management and FSU will explain choices to staff. All employees will be encouraged to attend information sessions run by CGU/FSU.

Photographer: Michael Kayner



FSU Reps L-R Andrew Howard, Simon McMahon, Scott Cooper, Mohamed Khalil and Gary Jose secure an improved RDO structure.

HEY AMP, WHERE’S OUR AGREEMENT?

FSU members at AMP say it’s not just about the money. There are changes happening in the industry that recognise the difficulties that employees experience in managing Work/Life balance.

“Many people find balancing their work and life priorities difficult and recent improvements to conditions such as parental leave recognise this fact”, says FSU Rep John King. “It’s important that AMP keeps pace with other finance sector employers and implements these new improvements through a new collective agreement negotiated with FSU.”

Our collective agreements are delivering progressive outcomes for members. These include more flexible work patterns and even a volunteer charity day. FSU Reps have been actively involved in generating these results for their members.

The Zurich Agreement provides up to 12 weeks paid maternity leave and generous Education Assistance provision. The agreement also incorporates volunteer emergency leave and blood donation leave.

So, AMP where’s our Agreement?

RECRUIT A FRIEND COMPETITION A RAGING SUCCESS

The recent recruitment drive for WA resulted in 268 new members over the 3 month period. The incentive for the recruit a friend competition was an 80cm television prize, just in time to watch the Olympics. The recruiter, Vanessa Payne, won the TV and the new member, Sarah Yusuf won a week for six in one of our holiday homes in Kalbarri. Needless to say, both were thrilled with their win.



Photo supplied by FSU

Vanessa (left) and Sarah (middle) being presented with the news of their win.

GREG DRIVES THE ROAD TO A FAIR OUTCOME

IAG Assessor Greg Studd and his workmates around the country are concerned at the prospect of cuts in their base salary due to the impact of changes with regard to their tool of trade vehicle.

Under current arrangements, IAG motor assessors are paid a base wage and a non-cash benefit amount for their tool of trade vehicles. Up until the present, leave and overtime have been calculated on the basis of the base pay rate, while super and incentive bonuses have been paid on the total amount (Total Salary Package).

From IAG's perspective, the problem is that movements in motor vehicle expenses have altered assessors remuneration outside the company's annual pay review cycle and incentive bonus schemes.

To rectify this problem of "creeping remuneration", IAG have changed the rules applying to tool of trade vehicle expenses, which in essence means every increase in expenses will be matched by an equal decrease in base pay to maintain the same overall remuneration.

"Naturally we're wound up by the thought of less take home pay. We have families to think of, and every dollar counts. Under the new system, we potentially stand to suffer further significant reductions in our pay as a result of spiralling Fringe Benefits Tax costs. We understand that we're on a good thing, using a car on weekends, but we've been told this is part of our package. We're not asking for a pay increase, just asking that our base salary be left alone".

"At a meeting of FSU members, people were offering ways to compensate the costs to the company, such as sharing cars and driving LPG fuelled cars", says Greg. "I have taken these suggestions to management but haven't received any response. They've sent us loads of information about how FBT works, but haven't actually answered any of our questions. They haven't told us that we're wrong either. With no management response, we decided to get the Union office involved".

Photographer: Michael Bayner



"Leave our Base Salary alone" says FSU member Greg Studd and his workmates.

"This is unacceptable", says FSU official, Susan Kenna. "IAG are trying to disguise this fact by saying that all future overtime allowances and leave loading will be calculated on Total Salary, but the fact is that the Assessor's day-to-day pay will be affected".

"Assessors in Victoria are annoyed because through no fault of their own, management decided to change an assessor's role which has resulted in huge cost savings to the company", says Greg. "It would appear, however, that this has also resulted in a lot of vehicles becoming stagnant. The km's on these vehicles have reduced significantly hence blowing out the FBT costs. Whilst the company is saving in one area, the extra costs on the cars is being pushed on to the assessor".

"Management needs to 'come clean' on the issue", he concludes. "If the cost is as minimal as they suggest then absorb it, work smarter and let's put this to bed".

FSU Assessors will take further action if IAG persist with this issue.

IN THE UNION? A BETTER PLACE TO BE

Unions have contributed to substantial gains for working people, such as regular pay increases, universal superannuation, Medicare, parental leave, and the protection of employee entitlements to name a few.

ACTU research shows that on average union members earn 16% or \$111 a week more than their non-union colleagues.

A recent ABS Working Arrangements Survey also revealed that Union members are more likely to enjoy RDO's, perform shift work, and have fixed start and finish times. Twenty-three per cent of union members don't have fixed start/finish times, compared with 39% of non-members.

So, if you're already a Union member, consider taking a step up to becoming a Union workplace Rep. And if you're neither, contact your local FSU office, and start reaping the benefits today.

Ambition



APPLICATION LETTERS

Whenever you're applying for a position, a letter of application (also known as a covering letter) should always be provided with a copy of your resumé.

The aim of an application letter is to convince the reader that you are genuinely interested in the position and that you should be invited in for an interview. Gone are the days when its only purpose was to tell the reader which job you're applying for and that your resumé is attached.

The more you know about the job you're applying for and the company you're applying to, the better your application will be. Do your research by carefully reading any information you have about the job and asking for more information if you need it. Checking out a company's internet site can also be a great source of information.

Your covering letter should:

- ◆ Be a formal, business style letter which is ideally no longer than one page and is addressed to the correct person - try to avoid addressing it to "Dear Sir/Madam".
- ◆ Include lots of action verbs, such as organised, supervised and participated in.
- ◆ Tell the reader which position you're interested in and why you're interested.
- ◆ Tell the reader why you believe you're the best person for the job. Always back up your statements with solid reasons based on your skills, knowledge, experience and personal attributes.
- ◆ Always address the selection criteria in the job advert/job description. When doing this, provide good examples to back up what you're saying. It's much more meaningful, for example, to say you've had 5 years of sales experience in a busy branch environment and have been successful in meeting sales targets, rather than just saying you have sales experience.

Visit the FSU Finance Careers Centre at www.fsunion.org.au where you can search for finance job vacancies and get up-to-date information to help with your resumé, job search and interview preparation.

Photographer: Kyla-Jane Hunt



Lenine Bailey completed the FSU Certificate in Frontline Management in 2002 and was one of the first students to enrol in our new Diploma of Business.

Express lane

QUALIFICATIONS COUNT

A recent promotion, to a new position in the NAB OCC (Operations Control Centre), has demonstrated to Lenine Bailey the strong link between work-related study and career advancement.

Competition for the position was keen, and some of the candidates had more IT experience than Lenine. "What apparently won it for me", she says, "was my enthusiasm, and my continuing commitment to self-development and tertiary education".

FSU Diploma graduate Adrian Scanlan (Qld) has just landed "a fantastic new job at CommSec, which has greater scope for advancement." He was surprised to have been offered the job: after all, he doesn't have the degree the position description called for. But, he says, "given the work experience I had, and my Diploma, they obviously were happy to take me."

When it comes to career advancement, any worthwhile qualification - even evidence that you're working towards one - is better than none. For details of courses available through the FSU, call (03) 9261 5325 or by email at terry.king@fsunion.org.au.

DISCOUNTED HEALTH INSURANCE - YOU COMPARE

Included as an insert with this magazine is a new brochure summarising the benefits of special group discount rates for private health insurance provided by HCF for FSU members at premiums not available to the public. Check out the brochure for more details and see how HCF's rates compare with your current cover.

Source: Google website



DISCOVER CHINA AND SAVE

Have you ever dreamed of visiting the Great Wall of China? Now you can turn that dream into reality by taking advantage of FSU's discounted holiday offer.

FSU Member Services is pleased to announce a heavily discounted holiday offer to China for FSU members and immediate families.

Departing 18 October 2004, the all-inclusive 10 day package to Shanghai, Xian and Beijing including the Great Wall of China costs just \$2,600 per person twin share.

Other trips are being developed for 2005 during May and October to coincide with the northern spring and autumn.

In summary, cost includes:

- ◆ return airfare with Air China ex Melbourne/Sydney.
- ◆ 4 star hotel accommodation
- ◆ internal Chinese airfares
- ◆ all transfers, tours, meals & entrance fees
- ◆ Chinese visa & travel bag
- ◆ Chinese tour guide

Cost excludes:

- ◆ Australian airport taxes (\$35pp), travel insurance, tipping & personal expenses.

Bookings can be made with a \$200 deposit with the balance payable 60 days prior to departure.

Full itinerary details for October 2004 are featured on the FSU website in the Member Services menu under "Holidays". It is expected that similar sorts of itinerary details and similar prices would be available for the proposed 2005 trips although this is obviously subject to confirmation.

To enquire about the October 2004 trip or to express an interest so you can receive more information about either of the 2005 trips when they become available call FSU Member Services on 1300 366 378.

The finance market has moved.

SEEK and you shall find.

If you're thinking of changing jobs, visit www.fsunion.org.au

REPS COURSES IN 2004

VICTORIA/TASMANIA

The next reps training dates are:

- Tuesday 10th & Wednesday 11th August - Intro Reps
- Tuesday 14th & Wednesday 15th September - Advanced Reps
- Tuesday 12th & Wednesday 13th October - Intro Reps
- Tuesday 9th & Wednesday 10th November - Advanced Reps
- Tuesday 23rd & Wednesday 24th November - Intro Reps

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

The next reps training dates are:

- Day 2 - Tuesday 17 August - Intro Reps
- Day 1 - Wednesday 15 September - Intro Reps
- Day 2 - Wednesday 20 October - Intro Reps
- Wednesday 10 November - Advanced Reps

QUEENSLAND

The next reps training dates are:

- Thursday 19th August - Brisbane Intro Reps
- Friday 22nd October - Brisbane Advanced Reps
- Thursday 28th October - Toowoomba Advanced Reps

- Friday 12th November - Sunshine Coast Intro Reps
- Friday 19th November - Gold Coast Intro Reps
- Friday 3rd December - Brisbane Intro Reps

NEW SOUTH WALES/A.C.T

The next reps training dates are:

- Tuesday 20th & Wednesday 21st July - Intro Reps
- Tuesday 17th & Wednesday 18th August - Intro Reps
- Wednesday 8th & Thursday 9th September - Intro Reps
- Thursday 21st & Friday 22nd October - Intro Reps
- Monday 8th & Tuesday 9th November - Intro Reps

SOUTH AUSTRALIA/N.T

The next reps training dates are:

- Monday 16th August - Intro Reps
- Tuesday 17th August - Advanced Reps
- Monday 15th November - Intro Reps
- Tuesday 16th November - Advanced Reps

For more information call your local FSU Branch.

MEMBER SUBSCRIPTIONS

To keep pace with increasing costs and to maintain the union resources available to members, the National Executive of the FSU has determined the need to increase member subscription rates by 4% effective 1st July 2004. The new fortnightly rates commencing July will be:

	Per Fortnight (inclusive of GST)
Members working 30 hrs or more per week	\$13.50
Members working 21 hrs and less than 30 hrs per week	\$10.27
Members working less than 21 hrs per week	\$7.02
Casual	30c per hr, not to exceed \$13.50 per fortnight

JOBS ON THE MOVE

Since FSU@Work first reported on outsourcing and off-shoring the trend has developed at an alarming rate in the global finance sector.

For the first time in history, finance unions from across the globe came together in May this year to discuss the issue and the impact of outsourcing and moving jobs across national boundaries.

National Secretary, Paul Schroder, represented Australian finance workers at the conference.

“Many of our employers operate and compete at a global level. From that point of view Australia will not be immune from the strategies of off-shoring” said Paul.

The Conference provided a stark picture of what could happen here as representatives from across the world gave reports about jobs moving overseas.

OFF-SHORING - SOME STAGGERING INTERNATIONAL FACTS

- ◆ Between 300,000 and 600,000 US jobs going off-shore each year (Newsweek, 1 March, 2004).
- ◆ 2003 - 2015 Forrester Research estimated that 3.3 million US jobs could migrate overseas. University of California calculated that 14 million jobs could move in the same timeframe (Newsweek, 1 March, 2004).
- ◆ Deloitte Consulting estimate that 2 million finance sector jobs in western countries could be relocated in the next 5 years.
- ◆ 28 job groups involved including IT, call centres and back office processing functions
- ◆ Call centre salaries: US \$4,000 per month, India \$280-300 per month (Ofreneo, p18)

It's about corporate behaviour not nationalities

The debate over off-shoring is not a debate about nationality or race and should not be.

The primary driver for corporations to outsource or off-shore functions is to ultimately cut costs. It is reducing your employment conditions.

In India and the Philippines they are concerned that their jobs will move to Sri Lanka and eventually to China as English proficiency improves.

It is about the future of our industry

“Sending work overseas poses a massive threat to Australian finance industry jobs” said Paul.

“We have to act now to alert people to the threat. We have to work to convince employers and governments that this is the wrong path for our customers, for our employment opportunities and for our children's jobs.”

FSU activity and what members can do

The FSU has:

- ◆ Written to employers across the finance industry to determine what, if any, plans they have for outsourcing in the future.
- ◆ Raised the issue with Governments and Opposition parties at a federal level.
- ◆ Called for consumer right to know legislation to be introduced to protect jobs and consumer interests.
- ◆ Joined the call for companies to sign up to global framework agreements raising international labour standards.

Members can:

- ◆ Find out more by visiting our website at www.fsunion.org.au
- ◆ Raise the issue in discussions at work and at home
- ◆ Talk to your local politicians about their policies
- ◆ Let the Union know about any plans in your workplace to send jobs overseas.

NEW FSU LEADERS

The FSU has a new National President with the election of Carol Gordon to the role for the next two years. National Australia Bank employee, Paul Ferrari fills the National Vice President position.



Photographer: Neil Richardson

Carol, a Commercial Lending Officer with the Commonwealth Bank in Launceston brings a wealth of experience in financial services and a real feel for the pressures members face in their daily worklife.

“I have been a bank employee for the past 24 years. I have lived through 4 mergers and I know first hand the problems members confront in respect to understaffing and increased workloads” said Carol.

“The challenge for our union is to make sure we are all working together to deliver real outcomes for members in their workplace. We have to be active and encourage finance workers everywhere to get involved and make a difference.”

“I look forward to that challenge and I am honoured to be representing FSU members as their National President.”



Photo supplied by FSU QLD Branch

Paul Ferrari is looking forward to being an activist at all levels of the FSU. Paul has worked for the National since 1995 and is currently a Learning Consultant (Trainer) with the National’s Queensland Learning Centre.

“One of the main reasons I put my hand up for National Vice-President was to increase the exposure of our Queensland Members at an Executive Level”, says Paul. “I hope to build on my passion for promoting member activism in all parts of the industry. I’m intending to help develop a stronger union presence within the finance sector”.

“A commitment to supporting the National President and ensuring the decisions I make are for the benefit of the union and its members at all times are also of primary importance”.

FEDERAL ELECTION 2004

With \$100 million of taxpayers money being spent by the Federal Government on advertising, it’s not hard to work out that a federal election is in the offing.

FSU officials and activists have been contacting members to discuss federal election issues of importance to them and their families. Here is a brief look at the issues identified.

Health is nominated as the single greatest issue of concern by members. Maintaining universal access to Medicare bulk billing for doctors visits, public hospital funding and the need for better funding to the aged care sector are all issues identified as important.

Education and childcare issues are also nominated with public education funding and affordable access to University and Tafe courses nominated as concerns, with access to childcare also rating a mention.

Work issues have also been identified by members with concerns about the increasing difficulty to balance work and family, casualisation of work and the unfairness of workplace relations laws.

Specifically for our industry, members want FSU to campaign to protect jobs in the sector and to protect services for customers and the community.

FSU has raised industry concerns with all the major political parties and asked that they provide their policy response on the following issues:

- ◆ Restricting mergers between the big four banks;
- ◆ Protection against the impact of mergers and acquisitions in our industry;
- ◆ Provision of six months notice of branch closures or service downgrades;
- ◆ A full review of the implementation of the FSRA and its implications for employees;
- ◆ Fairer employment laws;
- ◆ ‘Right to know’ legislation that would make it compulsory for Call Centre customers to know if the person they are dealing with is overseas;
- ◆ Data protection laws for customers;

- ◆ Tying executive salaries to performance and providing shareholders with a greater say.

Further detail about these issues are set out in the FSU policy document ‘When Words Fail’ and can be found on the FSU website at www.fsunion.org.au.

All political parties have been asked to provide policy statements on all the issues identified by members so they can be published for members’ information ahead of the coming election.

Election Comment

Politics is more and more about ‘spin’ and less about straight talking. We hope to be able to assist members get through the ‘spin’ to the substance by providing details of the parties policies as they become available.

Industrial relations legislation is one area where the Government’s real intentions are clear. The Howard Government has come out time and again and made it clear that they are on the side of the employers.

FSU believes that industrial relations legislation has to be about trying to create a fair environment which works for everyone in the workplace.

It’s our view that parties should deal with each other in good faith and there should be an independent umpire who can deal with disputes when things can’t be resolved.

The role of government in such an environment is to help constructively resolve disputes, not take sides or openly oppose the rights of one group in favour of the other.

FSU has called for the system to be made fairer by increasing the powers of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission to resolve disputes; recognising the rights of workers to belong to unions and to participate in union activity without fear of prosecution; promoting good faith bargaining; doing away with exploitative AWAs and providing workers with strong, comprehensive Awards and Agreements that underpin their working conditions.