

Finance Sector Union

# ACCOUNT



FSU  
AUSTRALIA

Protecting **your rights** at work

Winter 2009 | [www.fsunion.org.au](http://www.fsunion.org.au)

## Unpaid Leave

*I just read a news article quoting Bendigo Bank's Owen Davies as stating that asking staff to take unpaid leave "is the new generation of thinking in management of costs".*

*The statement is made to sound like it comes from an authoritative source but smacks of arrogance and I hope it doesn't catch on throughout this or any other industry. I believe many executives, are using the economic downturn as a smokescreen to avoid the harder task of identifying and dealing with other areas of waste, and playing on staff insecurities as the easier path.*

Bill Welch QLD

## Bendigo Bank

*As a customer of the Bendigo Bank I am most offended that they are asking your members to shore up their equity position by "donating" 10 days pay through this unpaid leave idea.*

*I suggest that you should counter this offensive and insulting offer with a counter offer. 10 days work for 10 days worth of shares in the bank. This would achieve their requirement for your members to "support" them in their incompetence whilst most importantly ensuring that your members do not suffer financial hardship!*

*At the end of the day the idea that workers should subsidise owners' equity positions is inimical to the most basic ideas of justice and equity. My suggestion is, I believe, a win win.*

Simon Duncan

## CEO Salaries

*Nobody is worth being paid \$8 million a year for any job in any country; it is absolutely obscene that someone is paid anywhere near that amount of money.*

*The government should have a law in place that caps people's salaries to at least half that figure.*

*Because lets face it, if I was paid 4 million dollars a year for 3 years I would never need to work again and I'm certain I wouldn't go broke.*

Nathan Dodd QLD

## Offshoring

*Clearly by Gail Kelly's wording, offshoring is only on hold and not cancelled permanently. I would love it to be permanent, however, the fact that there is no mention of returning the already offshored areas to Australia also indicates that the hold is not permanent.*

*I work in an area that has already been offshored and we have lost so many staff with no replacements, and certainly no talk of doing so. Until these jobs are returned to Australia, I do not believe the fight is over with Westpac.*

Concerned St George member

## Dear FSU

*I noted with interest the FSU joining the campaign last week led by the CEO and director lobbies against the changes to taxation arrangements for employee share schemes.*

*I am disappointed that my union fees were used in support of this campaign; the chief aim of which was to try and preserve the tax concessions available to senior executives (and also the ability of senior executives to simply not report income on equity granted). As a recipient of a large quantity of options from my employer, I intend to pay income tax on any benefit I realise and consider that any benefit received by an employee from shares granted as part of their employment should be taxed as income. I am however neutral about the \$1000 of tax free shares (so long as the benefit of this concession is restricted to those on mid to low incomes).*

Regards,  
A disappointed FSU member

**Editor's note:** FSU successfully argued for the maintenance of the \$1,000 tax exemption on shares for employees earning less than \$180,000.

## MEMBER WIN



On most public holidays throughout the year, the 120 staff at the CGU Customer Call Centre in Melbourne are asked to volunteer to work.

The Enterprise Agreement covering these workers provides for payment of meal allowance to staff working overtime on a public holiday. FSU members applied to the company for payment of the allowance, but their applications were rejected on the grounds that they weren't working overtime.

FSU Reps at CGU contacted the union for assistance.

While the union were negotiating with senior management, the Reps embarked on a process to educate colleagues about their rights at work.

FSU successfully negotiated for back payment to be made to members at the Customer Call Centre, and CGU went back over their employment records, and paid meal allowance for each occasion members had worked for more than four hours on a public holiday during their entire period of employment.

The allowance is currently \$12.40 per shift.

*"People were really happy to get what they were owed. There was some disappointment initially that the company had held the payment back, but we're glad that as a result of our campaign CGU are now meeting their obligations,"* one FSU member told *Account*.

FSU Reps are about to embark on a greater challenge now, working to build FSU membership in the lead up to enterprise bargaining.

*"The FSU, even in small matters like this is, watching the backs of members. There are bigger things in the works and everyone should get involved,"* one Rep, who wished to remain anonymous, told *Account*.

More Member Wins on pages 4 and 5.

## Some slower than others to adapt to new reality

Just one month after the introduction of new Fair Work laws, FSU is in the midst of bargaining with many finance sector employers to improve pay and conditions for members.



Leon Carter,  
FSU National Secretary

Bargaining is already underway at ANZ, CBA, NAB, Zurich, superannuation funds and credit unions, and is about to begin at AXA. Negotiations for a new Westpac Agreement are due to commence in October, and FSU is continuing discussions with more insurance companies in a bid to negotiate Enterprise Agreements.

The good thing about Enterprise Bargaining is it gives workers and their representatives a chance to have a say about the sort of things that could make your workplace a better place to work, rather than being in the position of taking whatever is handed down from on high.

**The shift back to an inclusive process of negotiating key terms and conditions comes at a time when we are still reeling from the effects of out of control market forces. As we dust ourselves off after the GFC, one thing is certain. Times have changed. We can't go back to the same system or circumstances that gave us the GFC in the first place. Employers must maintain a dialogue with workers, and their representatives.**

Not all employers in our sector have woken up to the new reality though. Recently, the Bendigo Bank announced a proposal for staff to take all accrued annual and long service leave, and an additional 10 days leave, without pay. The equivalent of a 4% pay cut.

Did Bendigo Bank sit down with the union, or the bank's workforce, and openly discuss any problems that may have caused them to make this proposal? No. Did they talk to the workers representative about possible solutions? No. Have Bendigo Bank guaranteed that all jobs will be maintained if the proposal is implemented? No they haven't.

Bendigo Bank, stuck in the old "us against them" mentality handed down the edict, upsetting workers and customers alike. (See opposite page for one of the letters FSU received from a Bendigo Bank customer).

Imagine the pressure this places Bendigo Bank workers under. They're loyal to their employer and their customers, yet they need to be able to continue to make ends meet. They're aware that 10,000 jobs have been cut from our sector, and need to keep their job. The Workplace Ombudsman is now involved, and along with the FSU, is monitoring the implementation of the Bank's proposal to make sure no one is forced to participate.

It didn't have to be this way. Workers and their unions have negotiated changes to work arrangements to help tide struggling companies over, in many industries, in order to save jobs. In a new era of financial responsibility and risk aversion, with new Fair Work laws providing the framework, open, honest dialogue between employers and unions should be the new reality.

## Member Rights Centre - Snapshot over the 2nd quarter of 2009

If you need help with one of these, or any other workplace issue, call 1300 366 378 to get advice and assistance on your rights at work.

- Total number of calls received - **16,706**
- Calls about member disputes/cases being handled by FSU - **5,910**
- Calls to access Member Services - **1,054**

### Top 10 industrial issues FSU members have called about:

- RRR/Restructuring - **994**
- Performance/Performance counselling - **718**
- Sick/Carers Leave - **450**
- Bullying/Harassment - **332**
- Code of conduct - **294**
- Hours of work - **235**
- Resigning from job - **178**
- Workers Compensation - **172**
- Salary/Packaging (TEC) - **148**
- Compliance/Investigation - **137**

Over **\$2.71m** recovered for members in the June quarter

# BOQ members win over \$380K as branches close

Bank of Queensland staff in 10 NSW branches were told in June that their positions had been made redundant, and they would not receive any redundancy pay, despite many of the workers having a number of years service with the Bank.

Following extensive lobbying and representations from FSU, Bank of Queensland (BOQ) has now agreed to pay staff redundancy entitlements if their jobs disappear as a result of their branch being closed.

The situation was causing BOQ staff great concern as the uncertainty left them fearful for the future holds as one FSU member told *Account*.

*"It would be bad enough losing your job but to not have access to redundancy payments to get you through till you find another job is really rough",* said the member.

*"While the prospect of losing your job is far from ideal, at least we now have the same entitlements as others in our industry which is a step in the right direction",* she said.

BOQ branches are owner managed similar to that of a franchise arrangement, with owner managers running the business as their own under the BOQ umbrella.

However, many owner managers who have run into difficulty are just handing back the keys to BOQ Corporate, as is the case with these NSW branches. The owner managers walked away wearing the losses and failed to take responsibility for the staff left behind.

The affected branches reverted to BOQ ownership and the employment arrangements of staff were transferred. BOQ Corporate then considered the viability of the branches, and closed 10.

BOQ initially denied the affected workers were entitled to redundancy payments. FSU argued strongly that redundancy applies to the job, not the person and if the job has disappeared as in this situation it clearly has, redundancy must be paid. The FSU successfully recovered over \$380,000 for members made redundant.

FSU members in BOQ should be congratulated, by taking a stand on this issue they have secured just entitlements for themselves and their colleagues.

This case highlights the need for a BOQ Collective Agreement with the same standards for BOQ staff in Owner Managed branches and Corporate branches.

# What a difference a couple of years make!

FSU Rep Anne McKenzie remembers what it was like to be part of the team negotiating the first collective Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EB) at the Police Association Credit Co-Operative (PACC) two years ago.

*"It took 18 months, there was a real reluctance on the employer's part, and we were dealing with an advocate from VECCI. We got a good outcome, and got our RDOs back, but it was tough going."*

During negotiations for the Agreement that was endorsed recently, things were a little different.

*"This time the negotiations were much more civil, and the whole process took about 6 months,"* said Anne.

The team of FSU Reps at PACC knew what they wanted to achieve before they sat down at the negotiating table.

*"Members wanted a reasonable pay increase, increased paid parental leave, and they wanted us to fight to keep uniforms for non front-line staff after we were advised that they would no longer be provided."*

The four Reps, Anne, Maree Merola, Lesley Merret, and Jayne Kukuruzovic were well organised. They started educating members about the forthcoming EB process well before negotiations commenced, and put fliers up in the workplace that promoted the achievements of the previous EB campaign.

*"We got quite vocal in the workplace, and members told us what they were looking for, what sort of pay increase they were after, that sort of thing,"* said Anne.

*"Once the negotiations were underway there were lots of discussions with members about how things were progressing. Members were really interested to know how it was going."*

The Reps were organised on the negotiating front as well.

*"We would go into the EB meetings with an organised plan about what we would tackle at each meeting. We got a lot of value out of working together as a team. And we got a lot of support from the FSU too."*

In the end, the EB was overwhelmingly endorsed by the majority of PACC staff.

The new Agreement provides for annual increases of 3%, increased paid parental leave, and the phasing out of uniforms for non front-line staff over the next two years, an increase in allowances paid and protections for staff in changing hours of work. The Reps grew union membership throughout the process as well, giving them a stronger voice at the negotiating table.

*"People were pretty happy with the outcome,"* said Anne.

PACC staff were due to receive their pay increase at the time of writing, and will celebrate a very Happy Pay Day!



PACC Reps, from L to R: Lesley Merret, Maree Merola and Anne McKenzie

# CBA members fight back against lack of consultation – and win!

*United we stand,  
united we win.*

*Account* spoke to a group of FSU Reps from CBA branches on the Central Coast of New South Wales about their recent campaign.

FSU members working in CBA branches on the central coast of New South Wales who felt their targets were unreasonable got together in April to share their experiences and talk about ways they could act together to improve fairness at work. One of the actions they agreed to was to put concerns over targets in writing to their Area Manager.

The action has not resulted in any reduction in targets yet, but has opened a dialogue between the staff and the bank, on the issue.

*"The thing that made me proud of members was that people currently reaching target joined in. They could've turned a blind eye and hoped they continued to meet target, but they chose to speak out against the system that is unsustainable and unfair,"* said FSU Rep Louise Arnfield.

Disturbingly though, retribution seemed to be on the mind of one (former) Area Manager, who wasn't happy about Area staff approaching the bank in an organised way.

More than 50 CBA branch staff from the area were shocked when, without warning, they were given 4 weeks notice of relocation to another branch, and in some cases, a reduction in their hours of work (and therefore their pay). Most of the workers affected were part of the group that raised concerns about targets.

For FSU member Jane Cassidy, relocation meant adding 40 minutes to her daily commute, which impacted on her family life.

*"Having school age children, who need me to care for them and take them to their various activities, means I need to work close to home.*

*I can do the job anywhere, but family comes first,"* Jane told *Account*.

For FSU member Janne Writer, relocation to another branch was less bothersome than a reduction in hours and pay.

*"I've been with the bank for 30 odd years. I knew the bank couldn't make such drastic changes without consulting us, and there was no way I was going to let the matter drop,"* said Janne.

Michael Hughes remembers how worried he was when changes were announced. *"I support my Mum who is on a pension and the cut to hours and pay made things a lot harder for us. I was worried about being transferred to another branch, where I would be further away from Mum."*

*"I felt I was being treated like a number in the system rather than a person. We weren't being treated with respect,"* Michael told *Account*.

Michael, Jane and Janne joined 50 staff who wrote to the bank asking for changes to be put on hold until staff had been consulted.

The Area Manager advised all staff who had written to them that the decision would stand. Staff commenced the process of transferring to new branches, and adjusting to fewer hours and less pay.

In the meantime, the FSU Reps committee swung into action.

*"We have a strong committee of dedicated reps who communicate really effectively with each other and with the staff at their respective branches,"* said LEC member Louise Arnfield.

*"Every union member on the coast knows that the strength of the FSU is with them every step of the way. This absolute confidence in each other and the support of our union gives members the courage to speak out when things are not right, and most importantly empowers them to persevere and win the best outcome for all,"* Louise told *Account*.

FSU members who weren't facing a transfer or reduction in hours got involved as well.

*"I personally wasn't affected, but when I saw this happening to my colleagues I wanted to stand by them, and give people support,"* said former FSU Rep Louise Engelshus.

Louise joined more than 60 colleagues at an open forum between the workers and representatives from the bank.

*"Because we were organised, lots of people turned up and voiced their concerns,"* Louise Engelshus told *Account*.

*"We made it clear that the changes were not acceptable, and because of the number of people there, either voicing their concern or showing support, the bank listened,"* she said.

Following the open forum, the decision to cut hours was reversed, and original rostered hours were restored. All staff who had been transferred were given the option of returning to their original branch.

*"The level of support and encouragement between members didn't waver when the bullying got worse, and our unity is even stronger today from the shared experience,"* said Louise Arnfield.



*Absolute confidence in each other and the support of our union gives members the courage to speak out when things are not right, and most importantly empowers them to persevere and win the best outcome for all.*

Louise Arnfield



*This was a win for the little people. It shows how important it is to speak out when things aren't right. Don't be afraid of repercussions, the union can protect you.*

Robyn Vingerhoed



*It came down to good union work. We said "enough is enough", pushed back together, and we won.*

Jane Cassidy



*The union assisted us, and it was reassuring to know they weren't going to drop it. Working as a group gave the situation weight. There really was a case to answer.*

Janne Writer



*By sticking together we can win. We can change things and make a difference.*

Louise Engelshus



*The first thing I did when I joined the bank was join the FSU. You don't know when you'll need the union. My membership gives me peace of mind.*

Michael Hughes



*If you don't all stick together you can't achieve anything. Talk to everyone in your team and make a collective decision. If you want something done, you have to stand up and be counted.*

Sally Proctor

## Australian Government welcomes ILO Global Jobs Pact



Heads of State and Government, Vice-presidents, labour ministers and leaders from employers' and workers' organisations met in Geneva from June 15-17 for a Global Jobs Crisis Summit organised by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The three-day ILO summit included four high-level panels on the following topics: global and regional coordination, development cooperation, fundamental principles and rights at work, and industry enterprise-level strategies.

In response to the jobs crisis fuelled by the global financial crisis, the summit adopted a Global Jobs Pact.

This Global Jobs Pact highlights the importance of placing employment issues at the centre of recovery efforts in response to the global recession. It identifies a coherent set of crisis response and recovery options seeking to support jobs and build for the future for nations and the global community.

The Australian Government has welcomed the Global Jobs Pact citing government economic stimulus packages, investment in nation building infrastructure, and a Jobs and Training Compact with retrenched workers and Australian communities affected by the global recession, as examples of how our Government is already acting to reduce the impact of the economic downturn.

What will be interesting is what the Government chooses to do next. In detailing the components of the Global Jobs Pact, the ILO advises that as a synchronized global downturn makes it impossible in the short term for any country to export its way out of the crisis, countries should stimulate their domestic activity, primarily through employment and social protection.

The Jobs Pact document goes on to state that macroeconomic policy should explicitly target employment and social protection objectives in order to accelerate a recovery.

The objectives of the FSU's Invest in Australia campaign directly correlate with the Global Jobs Pact, in that it seeks to secure Australian finance jobs by ending offshoring, improving redeployment process to provide real choice for workers, investing in a Skills Fund to train and educate workers in redundant roles for alternative employment, and significant increases to termination payments to workers made redundant to reduce finance hardship.

In the banking sector, the Federal Government can attach conditions to the deposit and funding guarantee that Australian banks are participating in; conditions such as ruling out offshoring and maintaining Australian jobs.

## ANZ Offshoring Support Package

FSU's Invest in Australia campaign received a significant boost when the union reached agreement with ANZ on the establishment of an Offshoring Support Package for staff affected by offshoring.

The union continues to oppose offshoring of Australian finance jobs, and has long stressed the impact on employees, their families and their colleagues, the effect on customers who have to deal with overseas rather than local workers, and concerns about the security of sensitive personal and financial data.

Whilst the establishment of ANZ's Offshoring Support Package does not address data security concerns, support for employees affected by offshoring is long overdue, and is welcomed by the FSU.

### The Offshoring Support Package consists of 3 elements:

- ➔ Improved internal process for redeployment to minimise forced retrenchments.
- ➔ A Career Training Fund providing grants of up to \$10,000 to cover costs associated with further education or training, to help affected employees to find new jobs outside ANZ.
- ➔ A Past Employee Care Fund providing grants of up to \$15,000 to staff who face a period of financial hardship after leaving ANZ.

The Package will be available to staff who are employed in a permanent role by ANZ on or after 1 June 2009.

Representatives of unions FSU (in Australia) and Finsec (in New Zealand) will serve on the Councils who will consider applications for funding.

The achievement of this outcome will not affect FSU's continued campaign against offshoring as the union is utterly convinced that a strong local finance sector is the best way to ensure job security for Australian finance sector workers.

FSU is seeking a similar investment in staff from other finance sector employers, to assist workers affected by offshoring, restructure, or redundancy.

# ACTU Congress: 2nd June - 4th June 2009

*... it was heartening to see just how active the Finance Sector Union is in the Congress...*

Through the use of plenary sessions, caucus, joint sessions and local and international keynote speakers, the ACTU Congress 2009 somehow managed to compact all the major issues that impact on the lives of working Australians into just three days of constructive idea-sharing, discussion and ultimately policy agreement. Not a mean feat considering the strength of thought and personality present amongst the various Union delegations.

Having worked in the finance sector for 5 years, it was heartening to see just how active the Finance Sector Union is in the Congress, including an excellent presentation to the joint sitting by FSU National Secretary, Leon Carter, focusing on the Global Financial Crisis and the role of the Union movement in building a better finance industry through regulation.

Among others, a Special Resolution was passed by the Congress regarding the irresponsible behaviour of executives, proposing that specific limitations be placed on executive salaries.

As a superannuation industry worker it was also invaluable to have the opportunity to attend, along with Michael Clifford, FSU Qld Local Executive Secretary, and participate in, a plenary session focussing on Retirement Income Security & Workers' Capital. At this session, among other things, it was agreed that 15% should continue to be the Union movement's target for minimum superannuation contributions for all workers. Poignantly, I also participated in a plenary session regarding Environment and Climate Change at a time when the exact same policy and regulatory matters were being debated simultaneously within Federal Parliament.

To be given the opportunity to attend an ACTU Congress was a real privilege. I am proud to have participated in this vital mechanism in the democratic processes of the Union movement locally, nationally and internationally. The Congress really showed the ability of the Union and its members to not only participate in, but to also impose influence on, the political environment across all levels.



**David Callanan**  
Precision Administration Services

I certainly hope to get the opportunity to attend another Congress, and I'd encourage anyone who has thoughts or ideas on a particular subject to raise any suggested modifications to ACTU policy directly with the FSU.

## Improve your employability through education and training

Adding skills and qualifications to your résumé can help you maintain your finance career in an unpredictable job market.

Your job security is inextricably linked to your skills and qualifications. This means that it's vital to ensure you have the skills and qualifications needed now and in the future.

Finance employers see professional qualifications for finance workers as being critical. This is being demonstrated in the way they are increasingly choosing to employ people with qualifications. Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that 51% of finance industry employees have qualifications at Diploma level or higher. This compares with 45% in 2004 and represents a trend that is likely to continue.

If you don't have a qualification, now is a good time to get one. Universities and TAFE's across Australia cater for busy people who want to study while also balancing their work and family responsibilities. Courses are more flexible than ever, often allowing you to start, finish and take breaks from study when it suits you best. Advancements such as online study and intensive courses have made this possible.

Whether you're already a university graduate or someone who hasn't studied since high school, there's a good chance you'll find something to suit you amongst the various education programs available through the FSU.

Currently available are courses in Frontline Management, Call Centre Management and various short courses on topics such as Project Management, Leadership and Risk Management. An MBA program is also available.

FSU members can access these courses at special discount rates. For further information, visit the FSU Careers Centre at [www.fsunion.org.au](http://www.fsunion.org.au) or call us on 1300 366 378.

**The finance market has moved.**

**SEEK & you shall find** Visit the FSU Careers Centre  
@ [www.fsunion.org.au](http://www.fsunion.org.au)

# This year maximise your refund ...

**TAX RETURNS**  
AUSTRALIA

SAVE \$5  
CLICK  
HERE

The simplest  
way to do  
your tax return  
is online

Log onto:  
[fsu.taxreturnsaustralia.com.au](http://fsu.taxreturnsaustralia.com.au)

using Australia's largest Accountant based online service, **Tax Returns Australia**.

Here's what's included in this unique service available especially for members of the Finance Sector Union:

- ✓ Reduced lodgement fee of just \$44 inc GST (normal price \$49)
- ✓ Tax agent to check all returns prior to ATO lodgement
- ✓ Unlimited online support
- ✓ Free telephone helpdesk support (usually \$15)
- ✓ Various payment options
- ✓ Pay fee direct from refund facility (\$6 admin fee)
- ✓ Industry specific Deductions and Entitlement guide(s)
- ✓ Opportunity to maximise your tax return
- ✓ A fast simple solution to tax return lodgement

With all this on offer, why not complete your 2009 tax return using the **Tax Returns Australia** system?

## Ready to give TRA a go?

Just log onto [fsu.taxreturnsaustralia.com.au](http://fsu.taxreturnsaustralia.com.au) to check out the info page and click through to begin your 2009 return.

The TRA system will save you time, remove confusion and make completing your return more straightforward than ever.



*"It's a while until I retire, but I know AustralianSuper will look after my super till then."*

Ma Kham, AustralianSuper member.

# Run only to profit members

Super is about saving. So it makes sense to be with a fund like AustralianSuper that is run only to profit members, doesn't pay dividends or commissions to agents, and has low fees.

As one of the largest industry super funds, AustralianSuper looks after the retirement savings for over 1.4 million everyday Australians.

Put us to work for you. Call 1300 300 273  
or go to [www.AustralianSuper.com](http://www.AustralianSuper.com)

- ⊕ Low fees
- ⊕ Run only to profit members
- ⊕ Solid long-term investment performance\*

**AustralianSuper**



This information is of a general nature and does not take into account your personal objectives, situation or needs. Before making a decision about AustralianSuper, consider your financial requirements and read our Product Disclosure Statement, which is available on our website or by calling us. AustralianSuper Pty Ltd ABN 94 006 457 987 AFSL 233788, Trustee of AustralianSuper ABN 65 714 394 898. \* Investment returns are not guaranteed as all investments carry some risk. Past performance gives no indication of future returns. Statements made by members have been reproduced with their consent and this consent has not been withdrawn at the date of publication. "Industry SuperFund" logo used with permission of Industry Fund Services (IFS) and this consent has not been withdrawn at the date of publication.

AUSS 29516