

YOUR NATIONAL ENTERPRISE COUNCIL IS LOOKING OUT FOR YOU

Photographer: Ollie Winter-Iving



Delegates from the RBA NEC met in Melbourne on 30 March 2007 to undertake planning for the coming year. Pictured L-R: Marc Bampton (NEC President), Don Peddie (FSU) and Melanie Dowsett. Not pictured: Ann Kendall, David Symonds, Karl Giese, Rekha Pillay, Lucy Carmona, Jason Jux, Craig Baker, Melissa Beattie and Anna Park.

Last year the FSU reached an important milestone in the structure of the Union with the establishment of member councils that represent various parts of the industry. The new Councils are crucial in ensuring that the FSU is a democratic organisation, and that it accurately represents the views of a diverse cross section of the Union's members.

There are seven state based FSU National Enterprise Councils (NEC's) Australia wide, representing members in banks, insurance and other financial institutions. Because of the unique role of the Reserve Bank, members here have their own NEC elected solely by RBA members. The NEC then elects a President who then represents all RBA members at National level at regular policy meetings with the other NEC presidents and full-time FSU Secretaries.

Before embarking on the first annual National Planning cycle for the FSU, NEC delegates met in Melbourne on 30 March for a Planning Day.

Delegates were given an overview of FSU's policy position on offshoring, pay equity and superannuation before breaking into Enterprise groups to discuss plans for the next 12 months. Your RBA NEC has focused on ways to build

'employee power' to influence and improve conditions of members, and to further build membership and effective communication channels amongst members.

The top 5 issues for the members in RBA are:

1. Completion of a new FSU/RBA collective agreement
2. Securing agreed minimum salary increases
3. Protecting established employment conditions in the 'WorkChoices' environment
4. Work/life balance
5. Increasing membership by a minimum 10% to improve bargaining power with the Bank

FSU COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT AT NOTE PRINTING AUSTRALIA

FSU members and those of the AMWU and CEPU at Note Printing Australia Limited (NPA) have just concluded negotiations with NPA regarding salary increases and workplace conditions to apply through to end-March 2011. Over 95% of NPA employees are union members, determined to see fair workplace conditions prevail through a new union negotiated agreement.

“ Having a designated time to concentrate on what the Union is all about and where we need to head in the future really helped me understand my position in my NEC. Also hearing about how everything that we are experiencing here in Australia with our employers is also happening globally was a real eye opener. ”

RBA NEC member Melanie Dowsett.

NPA is a wholly-owned subsidiary company of the Reserve Bank of Australia, and both are ultimately 'owned' by the Commonwealth Government. NPA prints Australian banknotes and passports and various other security documents, and also prints a range of polymer banknotes for other countries.

The recently agreed changes to employment conditions at NPA will now form a new Agreement in terms of the 'WorkChoices' legislation. For this reason, our members were especially keen for union assistance in negotiating all the details, to ensure no 'hidden traps' could affect their established employment conditions. The final content of the Agreement is a product of the interest and input of the members and Joint Union Committee at NPA, and additional timely and helpful input by FSU employees in Melbourne and Sydney for which the RBA NEC (and also AMWU & CEPU) is most grateful.

Our NPA members are satisfied with the outcome of the bargaining process, and consider the Agreement a fair overall 'package' which safeguards their employment conditions for the next few years. The key points of the new Agreement are:

- ❖ It is an employer/union Agreement with a single set of conditions for most NPA employees in various employment categories.
- ❖ The Agreement is intended to include, continue, confirm and protect all the previously established key NPA Award and earlier agreement conditions, to minimise the ability/effect of 'WorkChoices' to erode these. It is intended to be a 'stand alone' document encompassing all 'key entitlements' through to 31 March 2011;
- ❖ As far as is possible under 'WorkChoices', the Agreement includes consultation / participation processes with Unions and employees regarding workplace change. The dispute resolution clause includes union assistance / representation if sought by an employee, and access to the AIRC;
- ❖ The Agreement provides for base pay increases of 4% effective each year from March 2007, April 2008, April 2009, and April 2010.

FSU ASSISTS MEMBERS ON THE MOVE: THE 'NORWEST-SIDE STORY'

Many Reserve Bank members are on opting to work in the suburbs during 2007 and have asked FSU to make sure their workplace rights and conditions move with them.

The RBA is creating a 'duplicate office' distant from the Sydney city centre for continuation of

key business functions in case of emergencies/disruptions to city activities.

The new and larger worksite at NorWest, 20km from the city, will require 60 employees on a normal basis and 200 in an emergency. Employees to be relocated sought the assistance of the RBA National Enterprise Council (NEC) regarding their concerns of who would be required to work at the new location, what additional assistance should be provided to them to meet additional travel times and costs, as well as related issues such as flexibility with start/finish times, and changed childcare requirements.

The Bank pressures staff

Initially the Bank bluntly told staff that they would be required to work at the new location and would be expected to work the same hours as at RBA Head Office, despite the fact that for some, significant additional travel time was involved. They were offered a small additional daily allowance which the Bank deemed sufficient to offset this change of location, and were put under some pressure to agree to the Bank's terms for this relocation process.

Member concerns heard by Parliamentary Committee

In June 2005, a Parliamentary Joint Committee reviewed the reasons and costs of the move and directed a range of questions to the Bank about how staff would be assigned to work there, and how their particular needs and concerns would be addressed.

The Bank then provided clear details that it required 55 staff to move and that it intended to resolve staff concerns in the forthcoming Enterprise Agreement with the FSU. The Bank provided an assurance 'on record' that the conditions at NorWest would remain the same as those applying for the CBD Head Office. Staffing would be managed by seeking volunteers for the new site, with some permanently located there, and others rostered to regularly move between the new site and the CBD. Staff who found the travel requirements onerous for a valid reason would be exempted from relocation.

Final details yet to be agreed

Following these undertakings, the RBA NEC met with the Bank to negotiate the details of arrangements to apply to CBD based employees who would be required at the new worksite. The final outcome of staff selection on a voluntary basis was welcomed by members. However, the bulk of additional staff required for the new worksite will not move there until later in 2007, so it is likely there will be further translocation issues requiring the attention of members and the NEC in coming months.