



# AFSU REPS NEWS THE AGENDA



This newsletter is aimed at keeping FSU Reps informed of union activities to assist you to carry out the critical role you play in the workplace. Please take this publication to work with you and display it prominently for everyone's information. The Agenda can be accessed electronically by visiting the FSU website at [www.fsunion.org.au/News-Views/Publications](http://www.fsunion.org.au/News-Views/Publications).

## Go Home on Time Day - 25th November

### A message from the National Secretary

**Giftng employers with free labour in the form of unpaid overtime is rife across the finance sector and white collar jobs in Australia. It is a bonus provided to employers and it is keeping others out of work. On the 25th of November, Australian workers are being asked to go home on time and enjoy time away from work.**



One of the biggest bugbears for members in their daily working lives is the pressure placed on them to meet ever increasing expectations, let's just call them targets, with out any increase in staff.

On top of that, many members continue to report that even authorised staffing levels fail to be met by their employers, with absences due to planned or unplanned leave too often not relieved by trained relief staff.

The result is that members are working longer just to try and get the work finished so it doesn't pile up the next day and so that they meet the needs of their customers.

Recent surveys and audits of finance sector workplaces show that 59% of finance workers consistently work overtime. 54% of employees say that overtime worked is unpaid and generally goes unrecognised.

73% of finance workers say that there are not enough staff in their workplace to allow them to complete all their work during normal working hours and a whopping 87% say that they are not always provided with relief to cover absences.

Together with The Australia Institute and many other organisations, FSU members will be invited to take part in Go Home on Time Day on Wednesday 25th November.

The day will be organised as a fun way for members to highlight the issues of understaffing, increased workloads and unpaid work.

FSU Reps are asked to keep an eye out for further updates and materials promoting the day and to register interest in participating in the day through the national website at [www.gohomeontimeday.org.au](http://www.gohomeontimeday.org.au).

So take back what's yours on the 25th November and remind yourself what it's like to do something other than work on your own time. Go home on time and enjoy the other parts of your life.

## WBC reps form steering committee to guide EB negotiations

**Westpac employees have waited a long time for a new collective agreement. In the first week of October, FSU negotiators met the Westpac negotiating team to commence the process of striking a new agreement for the Westpac group.**

Since the merger of Westpac and St George, the differences in pay and conditions between the two banks have been highlighted. Westpac members want to be on a par with St George members, and St George members don't want to lose any of their hard-won conditions, or go backwards on pay.

To guide the negotiations, a Steering Committee has been established, comprising members from Westpac, St George and BankSA. The Westpac National Enterprise Council President, Fiona Jordan, is attending meetings with the bank, along with FSU negotiators.

A blog has been set up on the FSU website so Fiona can regularly report to members how the negotiations are progressing, and members can post their own comments. In addition the union has also set up a facility on the website to enable members to send emails to Fiona, or other members of the Steering Committee.

*"Speaking to every member around the country in person is an impossible task. By using electronic forms of communication, we can increase member engagement and give members a voice during these critical negotiations,"* Fiona told *The Agenda*.

Members can read and comment on the blog, read the FSU's claim and see Fiona's presentation to the bank, email Steering Committee members and download other information from one place, the 'Making Westpac a better place to work' page on the FSU website: <http://www.fsunion.org.au/Campaigns/Workplace-Campaigns/Making-Westpac-a-better-place.aspx>.

Contact the reps by email: [TellFiona@fsunion.org.au](mailto:TellFiona@fsunion.org.au) or [SteeringCommittee@fsunion.org.au](mailto:SteeringCommittee@fsunion.org.au)



**Fiona Jordan**  
Westpac National Enterprise Council - President



**Anne O'Connell**  
Westpac National Enterprise Council - SA/NT delegate



**Greg Owens**  
St. George Local Enterprise Council President - NSW



**Jane Fisher**  
Westpac National Enterprise Council - WA Delegate



**Melanie Landsberg**  
Westpac National Enterprise Council - QLD delegate



**Yvonne Songer**  
BankSA Local Enterprise Council President - SA/NT



**Carolyn Blackburn**  
Westpac National Enterprise Council - NSW delegate

## Reps play key role in Zurich Agreement



**Preparation was the key for FSU Rep Suzi Hallett, in the lead up to Agreement negotiations with multi-national insurer Zurich.**

*"I was fairly new to the role, having been a Rep for less than a year when we started getting ready for a new Agreement,"* Suzi told *The Agenda*.

*"It was important for all the Reps at Zurich to know the old Agreement inside and out, and to have knowledge about which clauses were causing particular concern for people,"* said Suzi.

*"We spoke to members one on one, and then surveyed everyone, making sure we included a notes section so members could write down their concerns."*

*"We developed our claim from that survey. At the time, we were in the midst of the GFC, so we took that into account and made sure we weren't unreasonable with our claim,"* said Suzi.

The proposed Agreement that will be presented to Zurich's 1100 staff over coming weeks, provides for guaranteed minimum increases that rise over the life of the four year Agreement. The final two years provide for a 4% guaranteed minimum increase.

Despite attending an FSU training session, Suzi found the negotiations were different to the way she had imagined them.

*"The training was good, and I'd encourage other Reps to participate, but sitting through actual negotiations was a real eye-opener for me. It can be hard negotiating with people who are human resources experts, and are thinking about these things all of the time or have a lot of experience."*

*"I was impressed with the FSU negotiators' depth of knowledge and understanding of business practices. They saw through the corporate speak very easily,"* said Suzi.

Zurich staff will vote on the proposed Agreement towards the end of October.

### Suzi's top tips for Reps

If you're involved in negotiations for a new Agreement at your workplace, make sure you keep the following in mind:

- Stay in touch with other Reps in the workplace and keep the lines of communication open. Keep developing communication skills, with training if possible.
- Keep motivating each other.
- Know what you can and can't do in the workplace before negotiations start (ie, Can you have meetings in work time? Can you put up fliers? Can you send emails to all staff?)
- Make sure you advertise meetings, particularly paid meetings, well in advance, and encourage all members to attend;
- Know the issues in your area;
- Spend more time LISTENING to people's needs and concerns than TELLING people what we're doing for them.

Leon Carter  
FSU National Secretary

www.fsunion.org.au

## New Fair Work Laws – General Protections

The new Fair Work Act brings together a range of protections against discrimination and other forms of unfair treatment at work.

For Reps, the Fair Work Act clearly protects your right to engage in lawful industrial activity, and to perform your role as a Rep.

The object of the General Protections provisions are to protect your workplace rights, protect freedom of association, provide protection from discrimination and to provide effective relief for anyone discriminated against, victimized or otherwise adversely affected.

The provisions specifically prohibit the taking of adverse action against another person because they:

- have a workplace right; or
- have, or have not, exercised a workplace right;
- propose or propose not to exercise a workplace right.

Taking action to prevent the exercise of workplace right, or taking action against a person because someone else has exercised rights on their behalf is also prohibited.

Your workplace rights are broadly defined as:

- employment entitlements under a workplace law, instrument (such as an Agreement or Award), or an order made by an industrial body.
- Workplace roles and/or responsibilities, such as those undertaken by Reps or OHS Reps;
- Initiating or participating in processes or proceedings under a workplace law (such as the right to be represented by a union in enterprise bargaining, or dispute resolution or to vote in a protected action ballot).
- Making an enquiry or a complaint regarding employment conditions.

As the provisions provide protection against 'adverse action', it is important to know what this means.

Adverse action by an employer includes, but it not limited to:

- dismissing the employee;
- injuring the employee in their employment
- altering the position of an employee to the employee's prejudice;
- discriminating between the employee and the other employees.

Adverse action includes the threats to take such action, as well as organising such action.

As recruitment of new members is a critical part of what Reps do in the workplace, it is important to note that the provisions protect freedom of association, and it is unlawful for a person to apply coercion to another person, or apply undue influence or pressure to another person. This does not stop you from inviting potential members to join the union, or explaining the benefits of union membership.

If you require more information about Reps rights at work, contact the **FSU Member Rights Centre on 1300 366 378**, or talk to your FSU Organiser.

The FSU, with support from the Australian Government and the ACTU is holding free seminars around the country in November and December.

The 2 hour information seminars are designed to help finance sector workers understand the affect of new workplace relations laws, and will cover:

- The new National Employment Standard that applies to all employees
- Unfair dismissal laws
- New arrangements for enterprise bargaining
- Application of modern awards in our industry
- Understanding Fair Work Australia and the Fair Work Ombudsman

The first seminar is scheduled for **Monday 2nd November in Perth.**

Seminars will also be held in these locations:

**NSW:**  
Sydney, Parramatta, Wollongong, Newcastle, Gosford, Bathurst and Wagga Wagga

**NT:**  
Darwin

**QLD:**  
Brisbane, Townsville, Cairns, Rockhampton

**TASMANIA:**  
Hobart and Launceston

**VIC:**  
Melbourne, Geelong and Bendigo

**SA:**  
Adelaide, South East, Riverland and Port Augusta.

For more information or to express interest in attending a free seminar, email [fairwork@fsunion.org.au](mailto:fairwork@fsunion.org.au) or contact Kelly Anderson on (02) 9320 0036.

Supported by:



Australian Government

**ACTU** organising education campaign centre

## Know your product – FSU House

**FSU House, at 15/105 Wellington Street East Perth, is operated by the Finance Sector Union WA Office and is available to all FSU members and their families.**

The primary purpose of FSU House is to provide low cost medical/emergency accommodation to FSU members and their families who may need to be in Perth for medical treatment or appointments.

When not being used for medical/emergency accommodation, FSU House can be booked by FSU members for holidays or other purposes. First priority will be given to FSU members who have a need for accommodation due to medical considerations.

Members like Kristy Scougall who had a medical condition that required her to be in Perth for the final 4 weeks of her pregnancy. Kristy lives in Carnarvon which is 904 kilometres from Perth, an 11 hour drive away. She booked the unit for 5 weeks for her and her husband Colin. She was grateful that the Union had such a benefit which would allow them to be close to the hospital and doctors and which was not an additional financial burden.

*"Please pass on a BIG thankyou to FSU for allowing us to use the accommodation at such a special time! Baby Caspar is doing great."*



**Congratulations Kristy and Colin on the safe arrival of Caspar.**

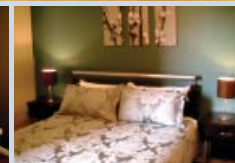
### Great rates!

**Rental for medical reasons:**

\$100 per week  
or \$20 per night

**Rental for holiday/other:**

\$300 per week  
or \$75 per night



**How to book**

Contact the FSU WA Office on 1300 366 378

Email: [wa@fsunion.org.au](mailto:wa@fsunion.org.au)

## Vic/Tas Rep Training Day

90 Reps participated in our Rep Training Day and one of the most pleasing aspects of the day was the spread of Reps' that we had. We had all areas of the industry covered with a good mix of age, length of service and experience in the role. This in part was why the level of interaction between everyone was so great. The Vic/Tas Reps who were there on the day were energetic, engaged and incredibly interested in being part of the effort in making a better life (the theme for the day).

As a result, we are in an incredibly sound position to build and gain momentum for our LEC's specifically and a reps conference in 2010. This places the branch in a wonderful position to ensure our members have the key role in directing the Union at both the National and local level. To all our presenters and those behind the scenes that made the day go so smoothly thank you.

**Darren Martin**

Local Executive Secretary, Vic/Tas Branch



## AGMs

**Vic/Tas Branch – Tuesday 10th November**  
RSVP by 3rd November 2009. Email: [victas@fsunion.org.au](mailto:victas@fsunion.org.au)

**NSW/ACT Branch – Wednesday 11th November**  
RSVP by 4th November 2009. Email: [nswact@fsunion.org.au](mailto:nswact@fsunion.org.au)

**QLD Branch – Wednesday 11th November**  
RSVP by 6th November 2009. Email: [qld@fsunion.org.au](mailto:qld@fsunion.org.au)

**SA/NT Branch – Tuesday 17th November**  
RSVP by 5th November 2009. Email: [sant@fsunion.org.au](mailto:sant@fsunion.org.au)

**WA Branch – Wednesday 18th November**  
RSVP by 13th November 2009. Email: [wa@fsunion.org.au](mailto:wa@fsunion.org.au)

## Training

**Vic/Tas Branch – Advanced Reps Training Course,**  
17th & 18th November

**NSW/ACT Branch – Reps Training Course,**  
17 & 18 November. 9th & 10th December