



National Office Bulletin

RTBU Members' Newsletter 7/2005

Update on various issues affecting members

This edition of *your* RTBU National Office Bulletin includes an update on the Howard Legislation and seeks members' views on competency based training.

Update on Howard Legislation

Members will be aware of the recent large rallies and public activities against the proposed Howard industrial relations legislation.

The proposals have been widely condemned across the community, including State Governments, prominent church leaders, academics and entertainers.

It's not hard to see why.

The rules of Mr. Howard's 21st century workplace are to be made by the employer in the interests of the employer. You and your family will simply have to adjust to this new reality.

To achieve this end requires significant change – and that's what Mr. Howard intends. Any current law that stands in the way of an employer getting its way is to be removed or weakened as far as possible.

Thus we see proposals to remove the award as the floor upon which agreements can be built, diluting the unfair dismissal provisions, imposing bureaucratic hurdles to undermine the capacity of unions to effectively represent their members, and the introduction of new systems designed to keep the lid on wages and conditions.

For details of the proposed legislation and the steps being taken by the union movement to resist it, members are encouraged to go to the ACTU web site – www.actu.asn.au

Union members will, and always have been, in a better position to fight the negative impact of the Howard Government because they have organised collectively to protect their interests. Howard knows this and accordingly is seeking changes to undermine collective organisation and action.

In coming weeks the union movement and the community will step up their protests against the industrial relations legislation. RTBU members are urged to participate in as many activities as possible and to let your MP know, in no uncertain terms, what you think of the legislation. And at the end of the day, the best protection a worker can have against anti-worker employers and legislation is to be a member of the union and an active member.

TDT: Review of the Training Package

In the 1990s, a system of nationally recognised competency based training in all industries was developed by the Federal Government.

TDT Australia is the organisation which develops competency based training for the rail, tram and bus industry.

TDT Australia must review the content of the 'training packages' every few years. At present the package which covers most RTBU members – the *Transport and Distribution Training Package* – is being reviewed.

The RTBU, assisted by TDT Australia has run information sessions around Australia to collect members' thoughts about the content of their training. This has highlighted a number of areas where the training package could be improved. For example, the units for infrastructure workers, wagon maintainers, signallers, transit officers, and electrical overhead workers need to be developed and/or changed.

Feedback will be sought from members about any proposed changes to the Training Package. If you have any comments, please call Kristin van Barneveld, on (02) 9310 3966 or email kvanbarneveld@rtbu-nat.asn.au.