

## **Summary of the QPSU Council Meeting** **29 May 2007**

QPSU Council met on 29 May 2007. 139 delegates were in attendance, plus observers met at the Convention and Exhibition Centre at South Brisbane.

Delegates received a report from the General Secretary, Alex Scott, regarding union membership. He reported that since the last report to Council 618 new members had been accepted, compared to 421 being accepted during the corresponding period last year. He said the total number of new members for the twelve month period to the 28<sup>th</sup> May, was 1,511, compared to 1,239 for the previous twelve months. Given the current environment of declining union membership this shows QPSU to growing against the national trend.

**The QPSU** Ombudsman briefed Council of issues he had dealt with since his last report to Council. In particular the Ombudsman to an ongoing issue also reported to the previous meeting in respect to the withholding of material that contained derogatory comments about a member, with the employer refusing to hand over that material. He said the Union had assigned an Industrial Officer to go to the member's workplace in an endeavour to have the files produced.

A highlight of the meeting and the subsequent Annual General Meeting was the Awards Committee report and presentation of Awards.

Council was advised that Mr. Don Meiers, President of the Bundaberg Branch and a member of more than 40 years standing would be recommended to the Annual General Meeting for a Long Term Activist award.

The Committee had resolved to recommend to the Annual General Meeting that on this occasion two members be awarded Life Membership.

Gordon Murray, the chair of the Awards Committee, read to the meeting some letters of appreciation received from this year's participants of the Pat Cousar Memorial Bursary. Mr. Murray also reported that the Committee would be looking at a re-distribution of the boundaries for allocation of the bursaries, and would report back to Council.

Gordon Murray said the Committee would be looking at strategies to promote the current awards, possibly through the Union website and U-mails. He said there were 3,000 members eligible for the 25 year badge, but nominations were few and far between and the Committee was concerned at the low number of nominations being received.

Sue Oriti, as Chair of the Women's Committee reported that the QPSU Women's Conference would be held the following day on, preceded by the Conference Dinner this evening.

Other important issues discussed by delegates included a motion regarding appropriate workplace consultation. The Collective Industrial Issues Committee, chaired by Toni Deaves, was delegated the role of developing a policy

Delegates received a Labour Day report. Delegates noted the efforts work of QPSU staff in a very successful day.

## **Summary of the 2007 Annual General Meeting**

The 2007 AGM of the QPSU was held in conjunction with the May Council meeting at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The Assistant Treasurer Sue Oriti, said she would like to offer an apology on behalf of the Treasurer, Peter Devey, who was unable to be present. Sue said the Auditors had given the Union an unqualified Audit Report, with some minor issues being resolved prior to their final report. She said the previous Finance Committee had set systems in motion which had made it very easy for the current committee to continue with their practices

Speaking to the Annual Accounts, the General Secretary Alex Scott drew the meeting's attention to certain line items relating to subscriptions income and the turnover in membership. He said this past year saw the second largest number of members ever joining the Union. He also referred to the sale of the Union's premises in Albert Street, and said the proceeds from that sale would be reflected as a cash surplus in the 2007 financial report.

Len Haigh, a former QPSU Treasurer asked how the Union's investment with the Queensland Investment Corporation was performing, and had it been increased.

The General Secretary advised that the Union had \$1 million invested with the Queensland Investment Corporation in a split investment process, with an average return of 13% - 14%. He said the investment had not been increased this calendar year, but that an increase would occur following settlement of the sale of the building.

The meeting re-appointed BDO Kendalls as the Auditor for 2007.

The General Secretary spoke to the role of the Union's Returning Officer. He said the RO role was primarily undertaken by the Queensland Electoral Commission, but there was also a number of ballots and elections for workplace delegates that required the service of a returning officer appointed by the Union, and he recommended to the meeting that Mr. Brian Merrin, Life Member of the Union, be re-appointed as the Union's Returning Officer for the year 2007.

Delegate Leona Keyes spoke to the awarding of a Long Term Activist Award to Fay Jeppeson from Education/ Leona said she had first met Fay Jeppesen in 1999 during the inaugural School Registrars' Conference, and at that time Fay was passionate about having a formal association for Registrars, and from that the Queensland School Registrars' Association was formed. She said Fay had continued to advocate for and promote the cause of Schools members and is a Life Member of the Queensland School Registrars' Association. Leona said the members of the Association congratulated Fay on her long term activism and thanked her for her dedication and support on their behalf.

Gordon Murray, as Chair of the Awards Committee, said that obviously the awarding of Life Membership is something that the Committee considers very seriously, and on this occasion the Committee was recommending that Life Memberships be awarded to Ms. Vivienne Doogan and Mr. Mark McCosker.

### **MS. VIVIENNE DOOGAN**

Speaking in support of the recommendation of Ms. Doogan for Life Membership, Mr. Murray said Ms. Doogan joined the then Professional Officers' Association in 1984, becoming a Council delegate in 1989. He said Ms. Doogan continued as a Council delegate through the amalgamation process between the POA and the then Queensland State Service Union, accepting the role of President of the DPI Welfare Committee.

Mr. Murray said Ms. Doogan was first elected to Executive in 1999 to fill a casual vacancy and in 2000 was the QPSU nominee for the Emma Miller Award in recognition of her contribution to the

achievement of women in the trade union movement in Queensland. In 2002 Ms. Doogan was first elected to the Senior Executive position of Junior Vice-President and in 2006 to her current role of President.

### **MR. MARK McCOSKER**

Mr. Murray said that Mr. McCosker had been in the Public Service since joining the then Licensing Commission in 1971 and had been a member of the Union since that time. He said Mr. McCosker was initially a delegate for a brief time in the late 70's representing the Licensing Commission, but had again joined Council as a delegate in 1990 to represent the Education Department and had remained a delegate since that time, also attending Triennial Conferences.

Mr. Murray said over the years Mr. McCosker had served on various Council committees and was currently a member of the Union's Awards Committee, Finance Committee and Building Committee. He said Mr. McCosker was a member of the Education Joint Consultative Committee and Agency Consultative Committee. Mr. Murray said Mark was a very active participant on the Education EB Bargaining Committee and had for a considerable time played an active role on the Education Welfare Committee. He said Mark McCosker was active on the Local Consultative Committees and was very passionate about the welfare of his fellow workers.

### **MR. TONY GOUGH**

Mr. McCosker said at the last Annual General Meeting, when Tony Gough was awarded Life Membership, words were spoken about Tony's dedication to the Union's history and his dedication to his employment in various Government Departments and, for a period, in the Union Office. He said he had shared an association with Tony as a Council Delegate and, when it came to expressing himself, Tony was a walking encyclopaedia and dictionary. Mr. McCosker said Tony instilled an air of confidence in delegates and he had a great influence on the issues he debated. He said delegates should make themselves known to Tony and they would get a feel for real unionism.

The General Secretary said Tony Gough was a Councillor whilst he was a junior Organiser some 20 years ago, and the Union is now remarkably different to that period of time. He said it is important that we now have a union of great strength and influence on members' lives, and this was largely due to how people like Tony Gough and Denis Bailey delivered their arguments to Council.

The General Secretary said Life Membership is a great recognition for Tony for, whilst he may not have won all the debates while he was on Council, many of his ideas are part of the strength of the Union today. He said Tony had played a pivotal role in determining the Union's history and had determined that the Union was in fact older than first believed when we celebrated our centenary in 2002. He said he would point out that in determining the Union's history, Tony had read every Executive and Council minute every produced by the Union

The General Secretary said a true test of Tony's ideals over the years is that they have been adopted by the Union.

Mr. Gough thanked Mr. McCosker and the General Secretary for their kind words and said that he and his fellow delegates at the time believed that their lives would have been the poorer, but for the existence of the Public Service Association of Queensland, now known as the Queensland Public Sector Union.

Mr. Gough said he had the privilege of working as a Research Officer with the Union from 1983 until 1989 and during that time had come across hand written Minute Books of the Union dating

back to 1902, which were now preserved and available for viewing at the Oxley Library. He said today's delegates may be interested to know that of the original delegates of the Union who attended the first Council Meeting, one was Arthur Hoey Davis, better known as the author Steele Rudd.

Mr. Gough said this organisation first came into being because of the Civil Service Act of 1889. He had, however, delved back even further and discovered there was an unregistered industrial organisation in existence since 1863. He said it was the Civil Servants of the day who drafted the first Civil Service Act of Queensland, which is the basis of many privileges we enjoy today.

Mr. Gough said his life and the lives of thousands of others would have been poorer, had it not been for the existence of this Union.

The President then congratulated Mr. Gough and presented him with his Life Membership badge.

### **MS. DEB WILSON**

Mr. Booker said he had not been around this organisation as long as some others, but there was one person who forged his life as it is in the Department of Transport today, and that was Deb Wilson. He said Deb represents what we are here for – to represent our members and to be there for them.

Mr. Booker said Deb Wilson shows a strength when representing her members and always has that pur pose that she will get the best for them. He said representing members at the local level is where Deb has achieved most. Mr. Booker said at this morning's session he wrote down a list of what makes a good activist, and most of what he wrote down referred to Deb Wilson – approachable, brave, honest, calm.

Mr. Booker said in his role as delegate he has endeavoured to carry on from the great work done by Deb Wilson, and said the members at Queensland Transport owe Deb Wilson a great debt.

Ms. Wilson said she was humbled by this award. She said she thinks people in the workplace just need someone to speak for them, and said she wanted to thank the Union's industrial staff for their support and to thank the Union for honouring her with this award.

The President then presented Ms. Wilson with her Life Membership badge and congratulated her on receiving the award.

### **MR. BOB RAMSDEN**

Ms. Jeppesen said she would like to congratulate Mark McCosker and Vivienne Doogan on their nomination today for Life Membership, and said it was an honour to speak in support of Bob Ramsden's nomination.

Ms. Jeppesen said when Bob Ramsden was nominated she saw it as a great tribute to the rank and file members he represents. She said Bob had been an activist for over 20 years, representing Janitor/Groundspeople, who are the lowest paid members in our Union. She said Bob formed a Common Interest Group for his members with the help of then Industrial Officer John Merrell, and worked tirelessly for their cause. She said the words used previously to describe Deb Wilson, namely approachable, brave, honest and calm, were also very suitable in describing Bob Ramsden.

Mr. Jeppesen said she wished to extend her sincerest congratulations to Bob Ramsden on receiving this honour.

Mr. Ramsden said when he looks back he thinks “Why me?”, but he is thankful to think that people out there believe that what he does is worthwhile. He said he came from a farming background and was very much anti-union, and when he became a Public Servant, he joined this Union, because its fee was the lowest. However, over time he changed his opinion and decided to get involved in the Union, and formed the Common Interest Group. He said he didn’t like some decisions being made within the Union at State level, so he joined Council.

The President then congratulated Mr. Ramsden and presented him with his Life Membership badge.

### **MS. ROS LAING**

Ros was presented with her Life Membership badge, which was awarded in recognition of her many years of tireless service to the union.

Mr. Ralph Davies, on behalf of the Queensland Public Service Retired Officers’ Association, thanked the Union for its continued support of the Association.

Mr. Hurse said he believed it would be worthwhile producing something to describe the history of the Union, and said he believed Council should consider the production of such a document.

Mr. Gough said that 12 months ago he had written a two-part paper on the history of our Union, i.e. 1902-1950 and 1950-2006, and that he had provided the document to the Union’s Publicity Officer for inclusion on the QPSU website.

The President thanked the Union Staff for their hard work over the last 12 months and for the extra yards they are prepared to go in difficult circumstances, and also thanked all the Union’s delegates for their efforts out there in the workplace. She said without these people, the Union would not be where it is today.

She said, however, the Union can improve and it will