

REGIONAL

New face on front line

IT could be the opening scene out of a John Le Carre novel on industrial espionage.

It is six weeks before Christmas and in the north of the State where the sugar cane fields meet the surf, building companies are gearing up to get as much work completed as possible before the festive shut-down.

Adam Lane signs up with a local labour hire company to take advantage of the influx of work. Lunchbox in hand and a smile on his face, he quickly impresses site managers with his work ethic and finds himself in demand.

But all the while he is working, Lane is watching, taking mental notes and biding his time – because Adam Lane is no ordinary labourer, he's a CFMEU activist.

"I spent six weeks working with a labour hire company going from job to job to get an inside view of the sites (and there was) some pretty bad practices," Lane said. "There's a few site managers going to get a shock when I turn up at their jobs, but I'll soon sort them out."

At the start of the year, Lane was appointed Organiser for the far north of the State from Tweed Heads to Ballina and Lismore.

He replaces veteran Mick Lawler who has moved west to the Hunter Valley.

Born and bred in Coffs Harbour, Lane believes the first-hand insight he gained before Christmas into

how sites work will help him serve the membership.

The union movement runs deep in Lane's blood, having been brought up on the battle tales of his father CFMEU Organiser and former BWIU veteran Mick Lane.

"Once I finished my apprenticeship and got into the serious side of building and saw how blokes were getting ripped off, I thought there's got to be a better way," he says.

The 28-year-old carpenter has a CV that belies his age – a union delegate with Walsh Constructions on the Gold Coast, on the State Council for the past two-odd years and most recently a move into management ranks as a safety officer with ADCO Constructions.

Lane admits the management move did not sit well with him as he did not feel the company was taking safety issues seriously enough and he decided to "get out before someone gets hurt".

With all the major construction companies active on the north coast, Lane believes his main task will be to bring them into line with practices entrenched in Sydney.

"They think they are out of the limelight a bit up here and try to cut a few corners – they think they can get away with not giving the guys the proper facilities."

On Lane's watch he hopes to end that practice. Adam Lane can be contacted on 0421 900 655.

Organisers change boundaries

The regional boundaries for CFMEU organisers have been redrawn. Mick Lawler is leaving the North Coast and will cover the Hunter. Jim Hutcheon will take care of members in Port Macquarie, Grafton and Coffs Harbour. New Organiser Adam Lane is looking after Tweed, Casino, Lismore and Ballina. For more information about who covers your area please contact the Lidcome office of the CFMEU on 9749 0400.

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