

ALWAYS ACTIVE

Chikmann Koh



He's back

Mohammad Morgani has returned to the CFMEU as an Organiser after a break last year and is already working hard to claw back conditions for workers. Arabic-speaking Morgani is focusing on members from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

Morgani says many workers are being short-changed on superannuation payments and entitlements because the bosses, still revelling in the Howard years, believe they can get away with it.

This is especially true for building workers from non-English speaking backgrounds. The 40-year-old says the best thing workers can do to protect themselves is sign up to the union.

"Within five minutes of you becoming a member we will be in fighting to get your stolen entitlements back," he says.

You can contact Morgani through the Lidcombe office on 9749 0400.

Trading places

The CFMEU has lost the talents of Organiser Scott Wilcox, who has resigned to take up the tools. Experienced Organiser Mark Sutcliffe is taking over from Wilcox in the Mobile Crane and Mechanical sectors.

Office worker Diana Fesili will also be sadly missed after leaving in March to move to Melbourne.

Koh made of write stuff

When journalist Chikmann "Don" Koh

was assigned to write a story about Korean tilers working in Sydney he had no idea it would bring about a life change. After interviewing the workers and meeting State Secretary Andrew Ferguson, Koh realised the tilers were in many cases being exploited.

An active member of the Australian journalist's union, the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, Koh decided it was time to down pen and lift tools. Now under the tutelage of Organiser Tony Papa, Koh is focusing on the tiling sector with its large number of immigrant workers.

Koh is delighted with the reception he has received from members and the support and help from fellow Organisers since signing on in January.

And already he is a man with a mission.

"Most of the members I deal with are from non-

English speaking backgrounds," he says.

"They have poor knowledge of the Australian standards of work, their entitlements and OH&S."

Koh wants to ensure non-English speaking members are given proper safety inductions that they understand.

"Experienced Australian workers know what to do and are very familiar with the rules and safety requirements.

"But many immigrant workers have a poor knowledge of these things. Because of the language barrier they feel stupid and small and will not question things. So it is very easy for them to become a victim of an accident."

Koh says migrant workers can be contacted through cultural groups, as well as on worksites.

If you have a concern about your entitlements or work conditions call Koh on 0430 129977.

Time to clock off

The CFMEU has lost two stalwarts

of safety with the retirements of Dick Whitehead and Des Highfield.

Highfield, who joined the CFMEU in 2006 as a volunteer Crane Safety Auditor, retired late last year due to illness.

"I have only one regret," he said at the time, "that I was not asked to join your team earlier in my life.

"It has been a wonderful experience for me to go out on the job with so many dedicated and competent union officials whose only thoughts and actions are the safety and welfare of the workers."

CFMEU State President Peter McClelland says Highfield made an outstanding contribution to the union and industry by training officials in crane safety.

"His depth of knowledge, particularly about Tower Cranes, but also about the industry in general, has stood as an exemplary example to many of our younger officials, helping them to develop and grow," McClelland says.

Meanwhile, Whitehead celebrated his retirement with a gala dinner in December attended by



SAFETY FIRST

Des Highfield, left, and Dick Whitehead

members, delegates, friends and officials including CFMEU National Secretary John Sutton, the Master Builder's Association NSW executive Brian Seidler and WorkCover colleagues.

Premier Morris Iemma, who could not attend, sent a speech in which he recalled his earliest meetings with Whitehead when a young MP.

Having fulfilled one dream of seeing John Howard booted out of office, Whitehead is off to chase another – the caravan trip around Australia.

But he warns the union hasn't seen the back of him as he plans to be one of its most active retirees on the picket line and protest march.

Steve Keenan is following up Whitehead's great work in the area of Occupational Health & Safety.