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Energised by sell-off protest

I write with regard to the NSW Government's electricity sell-off.

I am completely opposed to the sale and the takeover of our electricity by the multinational companies more interested in profits than securing our energy future.

I don't accept NSW Treasurer Michael Costa's argument that private sector involvement is now needed on the basis that NSW is now part of the national electricity market.

Electricity prices have skyrocketed to record highs in Victoria after its electricity was privatised, with consumers facing a 17 per cent price hike from January 1 this year.

Instead of privatising, the NSW Government should instead upgrade existing power stations to meet our short-term base-load needs while taking urgent action to promote and invest in renewable energy, such as wind and solar technology.

I don't want to see our key service jobs sent off shore because of big business.

I wish to congratulate the CFMEU on its efforts so far in opposing the sale of our NSW electricity.

Ben Blackburn
Lake Haven

Union's long service

I am writing to thank Andrew Ferguson and the CFMEU for its help and support in relation to my long service long issue.

I am so delighted that finally this problem has been resolved. Thanks once again and long live CFMEU!!

Frimpong.

Congratulations on beating Howard

Thanks to the efforts of all of you militants of the CFMEU, and of thousands of working people in Australia, women and men alike, the neo-fascist conservative government has been defeated.

On behalf of the UITBB, of all your friends and comrades in our Affiliated Unions on all continents, I wish to sincerely congratulate you for this great victory.

I am convinced that this is a victory for your working class, but it is also a major contribution to the progressive trade union movement, to all of us. I share with you your joy and I wish you all success.

Hasta la Victoria siempre!

In solidarity

Rino Gelmi

UITBB Administrative Secretary

(UITBB is an international alliance of construction-related unions around the world. For more information see www.uitbb.org)

Putting in the hard yards

Well what an outcome on election night. All the hard work put in by the men and women of the CFMEU paid off.

A big thanks to all and in particular my good mate and mid-north coast Organiser Jim Hutcheon.

He's done a lot of miles.

Bob Liubertas
Crane driver

Organiser's care appreciated

My dad asked me to write this letter to the CFMEU.

He wanted to let you know how much he appreciated the support of CFMEU Organiser Mark Sutcliffe while he was in hospital.

It meant so much to him that you would take the time to come to see him in hospital and at home. Your kind words, support and prayers really made a difference.

I request that you also thank all the union mates at the Hurstville site where my dad was injured for their best wishes and donations as our Xmas is brighter now.

Also, we would like to thank Kilshane Restoration for their support. My dad is sub-contractor but the CFMEU has still taken good care of my family.

Thank you again for your thoughtfulness and your friendship.

Charlene Pilling and All

Who are the biggest thieves?

Assistant Treasurer Chris Bowen was on ABC radio in late January saying employers who "thieve" from consumers should be jailed.

He was talking about the likes of Dick Pratt of Visy and his \$30 million fine because the previous government would not pass the necessary legislation to jail employers for corporate crime. I support Mr Bowen's position wholeheartedly.

But let's take it one step further. Why don't employers who "steal" from workers go to jail. If workers "steal" from the boss the police may be called, the worker charged and he/she becomes a criminal.

However, if a boss "steals or thievs" from workers, it's not a criminal act it's industrial.

We take the employer to court probably two years after the theft and if found guilty they only have to pay the worker what he should have had originally.

Why the double standard – workers become criminals, while bosses just get a slap on the wrist.

Employers are of the view that jail time is only for the working class and has nothing to do with the actions of running a shonky business.

We have seen employers squeal when the industrial manslaughter laws were being proposed.

Employers were horrified to think that they might go to jail if their actions (or inaction) resulted in the death of a worker.

Double standard. You bet. On behalf of all workers, I call on this federal government to provide some equity and fairness with thieves – white collar or blue collar.

Terry Kesby

From tragedy comes a lesson

I write to thank the CFMEU for assistance following the tragic death of my husband Nabojša Budeska on October 29.

I am now a widow with two children Luka, 3, and Nemanja, 1.

I also thank the management and workers of my husband's employer Hecdal Formwork and Bovis Lend Lease. The generosity and concern from the site where my husband worked is something I will always remember.

My husband only worked in the building industry for just four months.

He joined the CFMEU superannuation scheme CBUS when he started working, where he was covered by four units of CBUS insurance which resulted in a death benefit for my family of \$200,000.

Nothing will compensate for the loss of my husband, but this payment means my family will have some dignity.

I want to urge all workers to check their level of CBUS insurance. Many building workers are under-insured. It is only when a tragedy happens that we consider these issues of vital importance to the security and dignity of building workers and their families.

I urge all building workers to support the efforts of the trade union movement to campaign for the rights of building workers and their families.

Without strong trade unions, workers will be defenceless and without security.

Nothing can bring back my husband or the father of my children.

However the best wishes and support of the union movement and workers helps ease some of the pain.

Sanja Budeska

Sanja's husband Nabojša was tragically killed on his way home from work.