

Media Release

Wednesday, 24th October 2007

Unions Tasmania elects new office bearers at Annual Meeting

Unions Tasmania Council met today for its Annual Meeting and elected new office bearers. For the first time 50% of Unions Tasmania Officers are now women.

Anne Urquhart from the NW Coast was elected as the new President of Unions Tasmania. Anne is the State Secretary of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union and only the third woman to be elected as President of Unions Tasmania. She has a proud history of union involvement beginning with the Food Preservers Union in the 1980s. Anne began her working career on the production line at Simplot in Ulverstone, became a union delegate and then an Organiser with the Food Preservers' Union which ultimately amalgamated with other unions to become the AMWU. She became State Secretary of that union in 2004. Anne is also an AMWU representative on the ACTU National Executive.

Other Officers elected today include Senior Vice Presidents David O'Byrne, State Secretary of the LHMU and Roz Madsen, Industrial Officer and Women's Officer for the Australian Education Union. Vice Presidents elected are Tom Lynch (Secretary, CPSU SPSFT), Angela Briant (Secretary, Independent Education Union), Nicole Wells (Organiser, Electrical Division of the Communications Electrical & Plumbing Union) and Paul Griffin (State Secretary, Shop Distributive & Allied Employees' Association).

Newly elected President of Unions Tasmania, Anne Urquhart said:

"The role of Unions Tasmania & unions as a whole is to assist workers who have been disadvantaged by the Howard Government's unfair IR laws and to continue to assist vulnerable workers in our society.

"History has shown the only way to gain improvements in pay, conditions and safety in the workplace is by workers collectively campaigning through their unions. This is as relevant today as it ever was.

"It takes unions to bring issues like the terrible impact of asbestos on Australian workers to the fore. No government department could have done what unionists like Bernie Banton working together have done to get compensation for Asbestos victims.

"As a mum, a grandmother and a worker used to working long days and being on call, I know the struggle to achieve work and family balance. In the industrial climate caused by the Howard Government's unfair workplace laws, that struggle is harder than ever.

"Today's election really should put an end to the mythology of union bosses as blokes with bellies and braces. Half the positions elected today were filled by women from working backgrounds as diverse as education and manufacturing. This is the modern face of the union movement." said Mrs. Urquhart.

Secretary of Unions Tasmania, Simon Cocker said:

"I'm delighted that Anne has been elected President of Unions Tasmania today and I am looking forward to working with her."

Media Contacts: Anne Urquhart 0418 140562
Simon Cocker 0419 402377

379 Elizabeth Street
Hobart Tas 7000

PO Box 128
North Hobart Tas 7002

Telephone: (03) 6234 9553
Facsimile: (03) 6234 9505

Email: admin@unionstas.com.au

web-site: www.unionstas.com.au Secretary: Simon Cocker