

PTEU

WINTER EDITION 2013



Journal



Workers Rally for Rights & Safety



Work Underway at Kardinia Park



10,000 Attend Rally



Fire School Opens



New CEO for PICAC



Presidents Report

It was sad and disappointing to hear that Ford Australia is closing down its manufacturing plant in Geelong and Broadmeadows in 2014, with 1200 workers to lose their jobs. While there has been media conjecture that this was due to workers continually pushing for wage increases, Ford's President Bob Graziano has made the point that while the cost of running the business in Australia were double that of Europe and nearly four times Ford in Asia, this was largely due to the greater scale and capacities of the overseas plants.

The Gillard government announcement 2 weeks after the Ford closure that Geelong would become headquarters for the Disability Care agency was no doubt welcome news for the region which was hit hard by Ford's announcement.

The Disability Care agency, which was previously known as the NDIS, will employ over 300 people in its national headquarters in Geelong and 150 people in its regional office.

It's astounding to me that the state government has proposed legislation which will increase backbenchers wages by 8 % and shadow ministers and the Opposition leader's pay by 15%. How can this be justified when state public sector staff such as the ambulance employees and paramedics are bound by the state government's public sector wage policy of 2.5 % a year.

We're seeing cuts to education, health and emergency services, while at the same time our politicians, the very people who are doing the cutting, are awarding themselves massive pay increases, it beggars belief.

It never ceases to amaze me the anti-union rhetoric that goes on, particularly in the Murdoch owned press. You only need to look at their recent reporting of the WorkSafe rally which our union and others were involved in, to see that the message that we were trying to get across, that of workers safety, became lost. We don't take to the streets for no reason, and if we have valid concerns over our workers safety, in a democratic society we have the right to be heard and our issues be reported fairly and without bias.

Rupert Murdoch, who owns the Herald Sun, The Australian and Foxtel, is using these outlets to push his anti-union agenda and it's highly unlikely that you will ever hear a good word said about unions from any of his media outlets. Murdoch's News Corporation owns over 800 companies in more than 50 countries and is worth an estimated \$5 billion. It's frightening to think of the power and influence that News Corp and Murdoch wields.

Nazza Ottobre
PTEU President



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GENERAL MEETING DATES

Melbourne

52 Victoria Street, Carlton South

June 25th

September 24th

November 26th

Geelong

127 Myers Street, Geelong

June 19th

September 18th

November 20th

Secretaries Report



It was a hugely defining moment for the history of our union when we opened our own Fire Protection School in April. I'd like to say a special thank you to General President Hite from the UA and all our friends from the United States of America and Canada for all the help they gave us along the way. We certainly wouldn't have been in the position to take on 150 Fire School apprentices without a curriculum, so the assistance that the Americans gave us in designing the school and putting a curriculum together has been invaluable.

It was a day which our Union can be very proud of and one which illustrates our total commitment to the protection of our registrations and licensing. Without a trade school there would be no registrations or licensing for fire protection for sprinkler fitters, so we can be proud that we have taken this on with the employer body, to deliver these apprenticeships.

This is the first major outcome of the Affiliation Agreement between the UA and our Union. This is only the start of our collaboration with the UA as they will continue to provide their vast knowledge and expertise in the training area, as elaborated upon on page 18.

I'd also like to applaud the Gillard government and Minister Shorten for making the National Construction Code a statutory instrument. What this means is that for states like Victoria, which have attempted to implement a code for government work that is very anti union, they can no longer do so. This was recently ruled invalid by the Federal Court. The Federal government has now made it law, so Abbott won't be able to replicate what the Victorian Liberal party had attempted to do. If this legislation hadn't gone through, changes could have been made in the stroke of a pen, but now they'll have to go through the upper house to make any changes to the Code.

On this matter and many others there is a distinct difference between the Gillard government and Tony Abbott's proposed government. Abbott will undoubtedly attack the unions, like the state government and Premier Napthine have done here. For contractors who sign union agreements and union members, there will be much more protection for them to keep working in the industry. If Abbott was successful in doing what Napthine and Baillieu attempted to do with the state code, you could be kicked off a building site for wearing a union logo on your clothing.

This move by the Gillard government is a major Labor party initiative to protect unionised labour throughout the country. The Gillard government repealed Work Choices and gave unionised labour the right to continue and now the Code will reinforce that.

I recently visited remote mining communities in Queensland and the Northern Territory with the Minerals & Mining Council and Federal Minister for Employment & Workplace Relations, Bill Shorten. This fact finding tour looked at local and indigenous employment opportunities in the industry. It's important to remember that whether you're in a mining community, a big city or a country town, the licence of a plumber is what preserves the hygiene and health of these communities.

Earl Setches
PTEU Secretary



General President Bill Hite from the UA
with Earl Setches



Assistant Secretaries Report



We're currently in a dispute with Austral Refrigeration who are now owned by Woolworths. Austral currently do the maintenance and refrigeration work at all of the Woolworths and Safeway stores. We're working hard to negotiate a good outcome for our members and from the unions perspective we're not far off a settlement, but it looks like it might be a long drawn out exercise. Austral Refrigeration are holding off and are not prepared to accept the terms that everyone else in the industry has already agreed to. Some of the Austral guys have been stood down by the company for the last 4 weeks and there's been other bans and limitations put on the company as well.

There was an impressive turnout to the WorkSafe rally on April 30, bringing attention to the appalling levels of safety in the industry and several recent workplace deaths. The state Liberal government ripped \$400 million out of the Workcover Authority, which obviously hurts their operations. These inspectors don't have support or leadership available to them, and most importantly have a lack of funding to carry out their jobs effectively. All building unions do a great job in holding safety accountable, regardless of who's in government.

The PTEU and employer organisations are still out there fighting for National Licensing. Victoria leads the way in this area and while it's a slow process, the Union is fighting to protect the Licences and Registrations in this state and to lift the standards in the other states. This will continue to be an ongoing exercise to nationalise states in this area.

The Union have negotiated the insertion of Sprinkler Fitter testing into the Plumber & Fire Sprinkler Fitters Award, which is the bedrock of our scope of works. We currently have agreement from all interested parties within the Award. This will protect the future of Sprinkler Fitters employment in the country.

There is a full bench sitting at the Fair Work Commission in the next month. We have lobbied for an increase in the wage rates of Apprentice Plumbers, from 37 ½ % for 1st year Apprentices to 60%.

The Plumbing and Electrical Divisions of the CEPU in Western Australia have decided to part ways after six years of being amalgamated. The National Office have requested that the Federal branch of the Plumbers Union assist in the reestablishment of the branch in WA. I'm looking forward to working closely with the WA branch in the near future to get them back on their feet.

With the Federal election only 3 months away I'm deeply concerned about Tony Abbott and the Liberal Party's fiercely anti-union history. I have no doubts that if they win the election Tony Abbott's government would take any opportunity open to them to minimise unions' power and influence. From a workplace relations perspective Abbott's agenda is to reintroduce ABN numbers and single contractors, taking people off wages. This would drive industrial relations down to the lowest common denominator and certainly wouldn't be good for our members. In my opinion this is the major difference between the Liberal and Labor government for you to consider when you're making your decision on which way to vote.

Paddy McCrudden

PTEU Assistant Secretary



Fire Sprinkler Fitter Trade

Our Union and the National Fire Industry Association (NFIA) came together to fund the development of the college at PICAC.

A new \$700,000 apprenticeship college, the Fire Protection Centre of Excellence was opened at the Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre on April 18.

The Fire Protection Centre of Excellence concept came about after RMIT made the decision to cut the apprenticeship programme late last year in the wake of TAFE cuts by the state government. This placed the future of the fire protection industry and apprentices studying at RMIT in doubt.

The PTEU and the National Fire Industry Association (NFIA) came together to fund the development of the college at PICAC.

The College was opened by William P Hite, General President of the United Association, which represents over 370,000 plumbers, pipe fitters, sprinkler fitters and service technicians in North America and Canada.



William P Hite,
General President of the United Association

We're very proud to have assured the future of both apprentices and the industry in Victoria. If nobody offered this course, you'd see increased costs for the installation and maintenance of sprinkler systems.

This course will train apprentices to become sprinkler fitters, who will have the responsibility of installing and maintaining fire protection systems in domestic, residential, industrial and commercial buildings.

The roles performed by these graduates is critical and the community demands that these systems operate when required.



School Opens in Brunswick

This is a massive relief for industry who felt that the pipeline of skilled trade may be about to dry up, and a shortage of sprinkler fitters could endanger the public.

We're proud to have worked together with the NFIA to solve this problem. These apprentices who were faced with a world of uncertainty, will now be training in one of the best equipped facilities anywhere in the world.



William P Hite, UA with Earl Setches, PTEU



Sprinkler Fitter Class 2013



Brad Mackenzie, Daniel Sturzaker and Samuel Buckley, apprentice sprinkler fitters

New CEO for Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre

Shayne La Combre has taken over the **CEO** role at the **Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre (PICAC)**. Shayne started the position in December last year and has taken an interesting path to his current CEO role at PICAC.

"I'm a second generation plumber, my father was a plumber, so in a sense I've been around plumbing most of my life. I entered the trade by joining the Gas & Fuel Corporation, trained at RMIT, spending a good part of my early career with the Gas & Fuel Corporation."

"The Gas & Fuel Corporation saw the importance of developing their staff and resources, and that's something that I'd like to encourage more of today, as we probably don't see enough employers seeking to invest in their employees".

Shayne went on to do a business degree then a law degree. After the sell-off of the Gas & Fuel Corp he then went to work in regulatory affairs for Ikon and Pulse Energy, moving on to Standards Australia and then Energy Safe Victoria as a Safety Advisor before taking on the position of Director of the Plumbing Industry Commission, the main regulator in Victoria. During this time he also undertook a Masters degree in public policy.

"During that period I also chaired the National Plumbing Regulators Forum, the body of all regulators, sat on the Plumbing Codes Committee and on the World Plumbing Council, which is something I was elected to and am very proud to do".

Plumbing is a risky business

Shayne is keen to point out how pivotal a role plumbers have played in the health of our community.

"It's often forgotten how significant plumbers and good plumbing have been to the societal well-being that we now take for granted. Plumbers are sometimes their own worst enemy in that they don't understand the contribution they make to the community. One of the things I'm really committed to is making people aware of the value of having fresh water and management of safe water, something that still causes millions of deaths around the world and is completely avoidable."

"Australia has a very high standard of plumbing, arguably one of the highest in the world and it's important not to take that for granted. The levels of protection we currently enjoy, the training that we require our industry participants to have and the licensing and regulations that are in place makes sure that these high standards are maintained".



Shayne LaCombre
PICAC CEO

"I'm pretty passionate about understanding the risks involved with not getting that right and plumbers understanding their contribution, because if you muck it up you can cause some pretty serious problems."

"People may take a shortcut because they think it will make them more competitive on price, they'll get out of a job quicker, or help a consumer by charging them less, but if that ultimately results in an increased risk of spreading disease, issues with fresh drinking water, fire systems that don't work, or gas systems that are subject to leaks or carbon monoxide then that can lead to disaster."

"That's why the 24,000 practitioners that make up the Victorian plumbing workforce need to demonstrate quite clearly their level of competency and that they have been trained to an appropriate level."

"This is a moving train, what was appropriate when my dad was trained is far short of what is necessary today, so you've got to keep up with what the current requirements are, training, exchanging knowledge with your colleagues. You have to invest in yourself and make sure your training is up to a level that is commensurate with the work you're doing. If you're not, you're putting lives at risk.

Opportunities for Career Development

Shayne is keen to focus on the real upside for plumbing practitioners, the career development opportunities.

"I left school in Year 10 and plumbing has provided me with all the opportunities that I have enjoyed. Plumbing is one of those industries where you can invest in yourself, advance and go into a lot of different areas."

Shayne believes you should be doing a 2 yearly check , where am I now, what do I want to do over the next couple of years, what's the preparation I need to do for that.

"It used to be you came in, did your physical years, maybe went into supervision or estimating, design or teaching. Those opportunities still exist, but there is a whole raft of new things within those categories. Within the industry you can get expertise in areas such as solar, urban water harvesting and rain gardens.

PICAC's Vision

"At PICAC we are looking at ways to make training more flexible by providing better access to online mediums and improved regional delivery, but no matter what we do here or how flexible we are, it's still up to you, to engage. You need to understand the importance of life long development, both from a risk and a self development perspective."

"While the vision for PICAC is still evolving, we believe we're making a contribution in a space that previously wasn't addressed, that being developing the sustainability competencies of our industry".

"The great thing about this place is that all through it, imbedded in everything we do is creating a teaching and learning environment. I travel the world regularly and I can put my hand on my heart and say there are certain aspects of this centre that are by far the best in the world. And our aim is that this standard of excellence will continue".

"While we may have started out in the sustainability space, we have now morphed into other areas such as specialist fire training. The training and the facility here has no peer, and we are committed to maintaining worlds best practice".

"Now we have other industry partners coming to us saying 'what you've done with fire is miraculous, and it's made it an industry world leader', what can we do about our water, gas areas'. So we've set ourselves a bar that

we're going to achieve, which is to deliver the best training we can, not just in the sustainability area, but in all the individual classes of plumbing."

"We also want to see plumbers within the trade progress through to degree level, Bachelors of Science, Engineering. We'll be working with relevant tertiary institutions to create a better pathway for practitioners, which in my view is way too hard at present."

"Currently you have to go back to go forward, doing too much unnecessary work. Many of our plumbers can easily demonstrate that they have these competencies.

So it's not just the centre of excellence that were trying to develop, it's also the lifelong learning, starting here having left high school, to go right through to a university equivalent degree connected with this centre.

"We also want to support research and development opportunities, encouraging people to undertake the research to take the industry forward, tapping us in to the training that would follow from that".



Shayne speaking at World Plumbing Day



10,000 Workers Rally for RIGHTS AND SAFETY



Rally stops for a minutes silence at Grocon's CUB site

On April 30 we stood side by side with over 10,000 of our fellow union members, in a protest against safety in the construction industry.

The rally stopped for a minute's silence at Grocon's CUB site in Swanston Street, where three pedestrians were killed when a wall collapsed. The crowd also stopped at the Lonsdale Street Emporium site and observed a minute's silence for crane driver Billy Ramsay, who fell to his death from a crane at the site in February. The reason for his fall is still unclear.

The rally then headed to the offices of WorkSafe where they were presented with a DVD targeting Grocon over safety issues, which will also be sent to every member of Federal Parliament and to the Grocon's key financial backers.



State Secretary Earl Setches addresses the rally

State Secretary of the PTEU Earl Setches addressed the crowd, calling on WorkSafe to be more vigilant in their investigations, and to get serious with companies who continue to flout WorkSafe laws.

The PTEU is disgusted with unsafe workplaces, and our mates being killed or injured in the construction industry.

With an election in September our political leaders need to know what matters to our members. We believe that the policies that have made Australian jobs the best jobs in the world, need to be defended. Over the coming months leading up to September 14, be assured that we will be fighting all the way to protect your jobs and rights.

It's essential that as a union movement we work together to **stop Tony Abbott**. You only need to look at what's happened in Liberal run states over the last 12 months, which have clearly displayed an ideological opposition to unionism, to see that the writing is on the wall that the same thing will happen if Abbott becomes Prime Minister.

None of us should forget that Tony Abbott was John Howard's Workplace Relations Minister, a key player in Work Choices. It goes without saying that a Liberal government would be focusing on cutting back wages, with the big end of town expecting Abbott to champion their cause. Expect the rights and protections in the Fair Work Act to be wiped away and replaced with harsh restrictions.

None of us should forget that while our country is often thought of as one the best places to live in the world, the wonderful life we enjoy largely depends on having a fairly compensated and secure job.

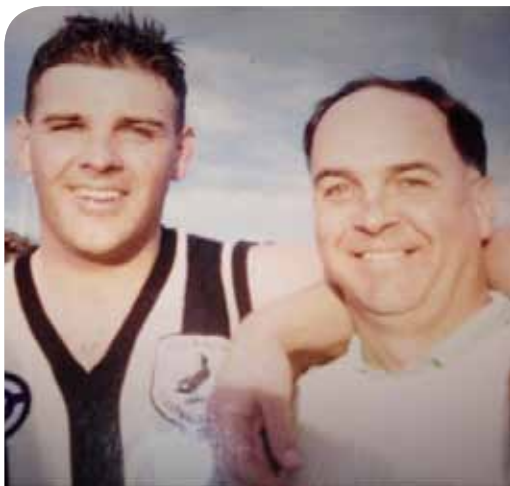


We all want to make sure that the standards we have worked hard for are maintained, not just for ourselves, but also for our children in the future.

No matter how hard he tries to reinvent himself, Tony Abbott is no friend of the working people. No bones about it, there is a lot at stake in this coming election.

Vale

PTEU member Mark Guster passed away on April 11 this year after an 8 month battle with cancer.
PTEU member Neville Thompson - passed away in May 2013.



Billy Ramsay Junior and Billy Ramsay Senior

Billy Ramsay Senior Dies on Grocon Building Site

We were again been reminded of the risks involved in our industry with the tragic death of Billy Ramsay Snr, who died after falling from a crane on a Grocon building site in Melbourne's CBD, February 18 this year.

This tragedy has hit very close to home, as Mr Ramsay's son, Billy Junior, is an official with the PTEU.

Billy Ramsay Snr was regarded as one of the best crane drivers in Melbourne and was a long-term CFMEU union member.

Billy, 59 will be remembered as a popular and well-respected worker, father of three and grandfather.

Billy Junior Takes on PTEU Organiser Role



Billy Ramsay Junior

I have grown to really love my new role as an organiser with the Plumbers' Union, meeting members on job sites is an absolute pleasure and privilege. Every job you go onto is different and the satisfaction of seeing the job completed is something you just can't beat.

My first job in the construction industry was as a labourer in the mid 80's, before I started my apprenticeship as a sprinkler fitter with "Matthew Hall". This was the start I needed as I knew a trade was the best way to protect my future and I haven't looked back since. Following the family tradition it wasn't long before I put my hand up to take on the company Shop Steward position at FFE in 1994.

Later on under the leadership of Earl and the boys I was elected Shop Steward at the Spencer St Railway Station (Southern Cross Station), where we had enormous safety issues including building a roof over the top of trains running underneath and of course live high voltage power cables. The average person on the street just doesn't understand or isn't aware of the dangers of working on some sites, with the surrounds changing all the time.

From there it wasn't long before I was elected Shop Steward at the De Sal job where at its peak we had over 200 Plumbers Union members on site.

Earlier this year I was appointed as Organiser with the Plumbers Union and was given the Western Suburbs to look after, which starts in Williamstown and includes Carolyn Springs, Melton and Sunbury and everything in between.

My eldest son Jarrod is carrying on the family tradition of working in the construction industry and is a 4th Year plumbing apprentice.

Billy Ramsay Junior
Western Suburbs Organiser

Labor looking out for working Mums

Working mothers now have a legislated right to request part-time work after they have a baby under changes the Labor government announced in February.

Building on Labor's election pitch to deliver workplace reform for families, the government will also boost protections against sudden changes of rosters and hours that can play havoc with childcare arrangements.

While Labor's 2010 National Employment Standards includes a right to request flexible hours as a basic safety net, it has been regarded as a toothless tiger and fails to include specific reference to women requesting part-time work after returning from maternity leave.

Under the proposed amendments to the Fair Work Act, which will be put to Parliament before the September 14 election, new mothers will have the right to ask bosses for part-time work after maternity leave.

The changes will apply to all parents returning to work from parental leave, including stay at home dads who take time out from the workforce to care for their children.





Paid Parental leave for Dads

To learn more about Dad and Partner Pay, Paid Parental Leave and other family assistance go to: www.australia.gov.au/dadandpartnerpay or phone the Parents Hotline on **136 150**

As mentioned in the last Plumbers Union Journal, as of January this year fathers can access two weeks government funded pay on the arrival of their baby.

Dads can now ask for time off when their new baby is born, thanks to these new laws which ensure they have the right to access paid parental leave.

These new laws allow fathers and partners, including adopting parents and parents in same-sex couples, to freely seek access to leave.

While many dads and partners get to share in the joy of their new arrival, there are also many people who previously wouldn't have felt comfortable asking for time off, or may have even had their request rejected.

The expansion of the Government's paid parental leave recognises that

both parents have an important role to play in the vital early months of a child's life.

The 'Dad and Partner Pay' gives eligible dads two weeks government funded pay at the rate of the national minimum wage, which is currently about \$606 per week before tax.

If you are the biological father of the child, the partner of the birth mother, or an adopting parent you are eligible. In addition, to receive the payment you must also provide care for the child, be an Australian resident, meet the work test, not earn more than \$150,000 p.a., and be on unpaid leave or not working during your Dad and Partner Pay period.

You can claim the Dad and Partner Pay up to three months before your child's birth or adoption. Or if you've already taken your unpaid leave, you can still claim after your

Dad and Partner Pay period starts or even after you've returned to work. You have up until 52 weeks after your child's birth or adoption.

Construction industry employees (is this the same for PTEU members?) other than casuals, who have 12 months of continuous service with an employer are also entitled to 12 months unpaid parental leave.

This is a significant victory for the union movement, who have been campaigning for paid parental leave for both parents for over 30 years.

The union movement will continue to lobby for paid parental leave to be paid at workers' ordinary rates and are already talking to employers about 'topping up' the minimum wage amount for their employees as part of workplace agreement negotiations.

PTEU PLUMBERS WAGE RATES

Effective from 1st March 2013

REGISTERED PLUMBERS				
	Plumber	Unregistered Plumber	Irrigation Installer	Plumbers Labourer
Hourly Rate	\$40.10	\$39.12	\$37.97	\$35.46
Total Weekly Rate	\$1,443.60	\$1,408.18	\$1,366.00	\$1,276.70
Fares (per day)	\$18.99	\$18.99	\$18.99	\$31.20
Travel (per day)	\$30.08	\$29.34	\$28.48	N/A
OVERTIME				
Double Time	\$80.20	\$78.23	\$75.94	\$70.92
Double Time & 1/2	\$100.25	\$97.79	\$94.93	\$88.65
SUPERANNUATION				
Min Super (per week)	\$155.00	\$142.30	\$142.30	\$135.00

Minimum Super 9% and will increase to 9.25% on the 1st July 2013

APPRENTICES				
	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year
Hourly Rate	\$14.63	\$20.77	\$25.92	\$32.82
Total Weekly Rate	\$526.68	\$747.65	\$932.98	\$1,181.66
Fares (per day)	\$17.06	\$17.06	\$17.06	\$17.06
Travel (per day)	\$3.66	\$5.19	\$6.48	\$8.21
OVERTIME				
Time and 1/2	\$21.95	\$31.15	\$38.87	\$49.24
Double Time	\$29.26	\$41.54	\$51.83	\$65.65
Double Time & 1/2	\$36.58	\$51.92	\$64.79	\$82.06

SITE ALLOWANCES FROM 1ST OCTOBER 2012	
City of Melbourne & Inner Suburbs New Projects and Shopping Centres	
\$2.8 Million - \$213.4 Million = \$3.80 per hour	\$213.4 Million - \$284.4 Million = \$3.95 per hour
\$284.4 Million - \$426.7 Million = \$4.10 per hour	For projects over \$2.8 Million see chart below:

Renovations, Refurbishment, Melbourne & Inner Suburbs \$3.30 per hour

Project Value in \$ Millions	Site Allowance Per Hour	Project Value in \$ Millions	Site Allowance Per Hour
\$2.8 – 7.2 Million	\$2.15	\$71.1 – 142.3 Million	\$3.70
\$7.2 – 17.7 Million	\$2.35	\$142.3 – 213.4 Million	\$3.80
\$17.7 – 35.6 Million	\$2.65	\$213.4 – 284.4 Million	\$3.95
\$35.6 – 71.1 Million	\$3.10	\$284.4 – 426.7 Million	\$4.10

For projects above \$426.7 Million, there shall be an increment of 10 cents per additional \$100m or part thereof.

Incolink first payment from redundancy increases to \$4913.00			
Redundancy	I.P.T.	P.S.L.	Training Levy
\$70.60 per week	\$17.05 per week	\$1.54 per week	\$19.14 inc G.S.T

TOTAL AMOUNT Paid per week = \$108.33

PTEU SPRINKLER FITTER WAGE RATES

Effective from 1st March 2013

REGISTERED SPRINKLER FITTER				
Hourly Rate	Weekly Rate	Fares Per Day	Travel Per Day	Registration
\$39.57	\$1,424.52	\$18.27	\$39.57	\$30.50
Overtime x 2	Overtime x 2.5	Minimum Super	Total Weekly	
\$79.14	\$98.93	\$155.00	\$1,744.22	

Minimum Super \$155.00 per week or 9% and will increase to 9.25% on the 1st July 2013

APPRENTICES				
	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year
Hourly Rate	\$17.58	\$19.34	\$26.37	\$31.64
Total Weekly Rate	\$632.88	\$696.24	949.32	\$1,139.04
Fares (per day)	\$18.27	\$18.27	\$18.27	\$18.27
Travel (per day)	\$13.18	\$14.51	\$19.77	\$23.73
OVERTIME				
Time and 1/2	\$26.37	\$29.01	\$39.55	\$47.46
Double Time	\$35.16	\$38.68	\$52.74	\$63.28
Double Time & 1/2	\$43.95	\$48.35	\$65.92	\$79.10

SITE ALLOWANCES FROM 1ST OCTOBER 2012	
City of Melbourne & Inner Suburbs New Projects and Shopping Centres	
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\$7.2 – 17.7 Million	\$2.35	\$142.3 – 213.4 Million	\$3.80
\$17.7 – 35.6 Million	\$2.65	\$213.4 – 284.4 Million	\$3.95
\$35.6 – 71.1 Million	\$3.10	\$284.4 – 426.7 Million	\$4.10

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Incolink first payment from redundancy increases to \$4913.00

Redundancy	I.P.T.	P.S.L.	Training Levy
\$70.60 per week	\$17.05 per week	\$1.54 per week	\$19.14 inc G.S.T

TOTAL AMOUNT Paid per week = \$108.33

REFRIGERATION EBA RATES

Hourly Rate	1/12/12	1/10/13	1/10/14
x 36	\$37.17	\$38.66	\$40.20
x 38	\$35.21	\$36.62	\$38.09
	\$1,338.12	\$1,391.76	\$1,447.34
Fares (per day)	\$16.51	\$16.51	\$16.51
Travel (per day)	.75 Hourly Rate	.75 Hourly Rate	.75 Hourly Rate
CRIP (per hour)	\$1.65	\$1.70	\$1.75
Basic 36 hr week	\$1,619.46	\$1,680.49	\$1,743.50
Apprentices			
1st Year 37.5%	2nd Year 55%	3rd Year 70%	4th Year 90%



Geelong Report – Works Underway

From a slow start 2013 is now well and truly in full swing with work in the construction industry. Projects underway at the moment include the St John of God Hospital, the Geelong Hospital and numerous projects at Deakin University.

Jobs that are nearing completion are the RACV Resort Torquay and the Grandstand at Kardinia Park which hosted Geelong's first home game against the Gold Coast Suns on June 1st.

Major projects due to start include Waurin Ponds Shopping Centre and Epworth Hospital at Deakin University.

Training Opportunities for Regional Members

First class training for our members has long been a priority of the PTEU and a lot of the courses offered at PICAC can be run out of Geelong Trades Hall or on sites in the area. If there is a course you would like to see run out of Geelong feel free to contact me and we will try and accommodate your requirements.

Quarterly General Meetings

The Geelong Branch also have a quarterly General Meeting. The Committee of Management strongly encourage members young and old to attend and participate in the running of your union. The meeting dates for 2013 are June 19th, September 18th and November 20th. Meetings are held on Wednesday nights starting from 5.00pm and are followed by a BBQ. All financial members are welcome to attend.



Glenn Menzies
Geelong Area Organiser

Regional Victoria Update

An agreement for the 2013-2016 Regional areas of country Victoria has been signed off. A lot of hard work and kilometres went into getting this new agreement in place.

Adrian Gell and I called a mass meeting at the Bendigo Trades and Labour Hall in early April and at this meeting members endorsed the Unions logs of claims, which sees the 36 hour week returned to the members and decent wages increases over the next 4 years.

The Bendigo Base Hospital has a \$700 million project starting soon, and other investment seems to be returning to the region, as there appears to be an increasing number of jobs in the pipeline.

This is of course great news for our members.

The Echuca Hospital upgrade is currently underway with O.P. Industries from Wangaratta starting on site soon. This will mean at least two years work for some of our members.

Albury Wodonga is also busy after a very quiet 12 months. Some of our members from Wagga Wagga have been travelling to Albury Wodonga to work on the Base Hospital and the new Quest Apartments.

I'd like to thank all the members in these areas who have stuck with the Union through the hard times, we

have now achieved these new conditions which you will be able to enjoy.

Earl Setches and Paddy McCrudden are committed to keeping the regional areas Union strong and proud.

Our role now will be to maintain decent wages and conditions for all of our members.



Neil O'Brien
Organiser



Adrian Gell
Organiser

Ray Myrteza still going strong after 45 years



Ray was presented with his 45 year membership badge at the last general meeting. Ray joined the union as an apprentice, signed up by George Crawford, and paid a princely sum of 75 cents.

Ray gave us a colourful insight into some of his memories and passed experiences over the years. Ray has also put us on notice that he expects a 50 and 55 year badge.

We often use the words proud and passionate, and in Ray we see a man amongst men who his proud to be Union and proud of his trade, and passionate about both.

Certainly an inspiration, and we look forward to those future presentations Ray.

Ararat Prison back on track

The Ararat prison project has taken a big step towards getting back on track, after the previous construction company went into liquidation in May last year. St Hilliers Construction collapsed after significant cost blowouts on the jail project.

In October global construction company Brookfield Multiplex was named as the preferred builder to take over the \$400 million expansion of Victoria's newest prison at Ararat. The project has now re-started and consists of an upgrade to the old facility in addition building a new 350 bed medium security prison. When the project is in full swing it will provide employment to 80-120 plumbers on any given day. The completion date is set for late 2012.

UA Training delegation visits Australia

Several delegates from the UA visited Australia in late February to observe the PTEU's training programs and determine how we can best collaborate.

The UA's Director of Training, Chris Haslinger, led the delegation.

"We have over 300 training centres in which training for apprentices and journey workers is conducted throughout the U.S. and Canada. Between the two continents, we have nearly 40,000 apprentices and maintain a membership of nearly 350,000. We develop the training material for all of these centres and programmes."

"Our goal in coming to Australia is to share knowledge, training ideas, and resources. We know that Australia is one of the world's leaders in sustainable technologies and water

conservation. We want to learn about these initiatives".

"And we have valuable knowledge to share as well. In the U.S. and Canada, we have considerable experience in specialized welding techniques and medical gas systems. This type of work is only beginning to emerge in Australia. So while Australia can teach us about rain water collection, we can share our knowledge about natural gas distribution".

We have also done a lot more heavy industrial work, such as power plants and refineries. As a result, we have established a broad spectrum of industry partners who recognize our expertise in areas such as welding. We recently assisted the PTEU by introducing them to one of the largest worldwide manufacturers in the welding sector.

The manufacturer donated valuable equipment to be used for welder training in Australia. This will allow PTEU members to experience hands-on training, which will only enhance their new skill sets.

"We also have valuable training tools to share. At the UA, the use of online initiatives, virtual reality scenarios, and different electronic resources has enhanced our training programs. For example, students can utilize online programs that help them not only learn the material but also reference back to it at any time."

The exchange of knowledge and skills between Australia, the United States, and Canada will ensure that all three countries will remain at the forefront of change and well-equipped for the challenges of a constantly evolving industry.

Historical Agreement Starts to Bear Fruit

As many of you will be aware, last August brought together the United Association of Plumbers, Pipe Fitters, Sprinkler Fitters, Steam Fitters and Service Technicians (UA) and the Plumbing Trades Employees Union (PTEU) with an historic Agreement.

The main goal of the Affiliation Agreement was to bring the two unions together through our mutually shared objectives, with the two organisations agreeing to work together to foster job security for their respective memberships, while also creating growth and new jobs in the industry.

Since January of this year, International Representatives Terry

Urbanek (UA) and Glenn Menzies (PTEU) have been working together to implement and strengthen the Agreement. According to both Urbanek and Menzies, the Affiliation Agreement has generated considerable interest from members in both countries.

UA members want to know what the work is like in Australia, and how they can benefit from this agreement.

"We respond by telling members that both countries will benefit from shared knowledge. Piping systems vary between the two continents, as do laws and regulations concerning energy and conservation. We want to learn more about these practices so

that we can better serve our citizens and members"

The PTEU and the UA have also agreed to share access to respective training departments and materials in order to develop training packages to combat future challenges relating to water conservation, energy efficiency and carbon sequestration.

International Representatives

Terry Urbanek (UA) and Glenn Menzies (PTEU)



457 Visa CRACKDOWN

With Conservative governments holding office across the country and the strong likelihood of the Liberals taking power federally in September, the industrial relations landscape looks set to get considerably tougher. You only need to look at recent events in Victoria to see that the rights of workers are being increasingly challenged.

The 457 visa scheme is one area that we have been keeping a close eye on. 457 visas are the most commonly used program for employers to sponsor skilled overseas workers to work in Australia. This visa allows the applicant and their family to work in Australia for up to 4 years. It is a requirement of this visa that workers are sponsored by an employer, so they must already have a job offer prior to applying for this visa. Employers are meant to demonstrate that they are nominating positions where a genuine shortage of labour exists.

We believe some unscrupulous companies are bringing workers in on 457 visas citing a lack of Australians with the required skills, when there are plenty of Australians currently unemployed who have the skills to perform the tasks. For some companies, not employing local people means they can hire workers for lesser rates and treat them differently to Australian workers who know the laws and OH&S standards that are required.

We think some employers and the state government have been taking advantage of 457 visas to pay overseas workers less and



consequently Australians are missing out on work. A recent example of this was local labour at the Werribee Water Treatment plant who were overlooked for work in favour of imported workers from the Philippines. On top of locals missing out on badly needed jobs, there was also the issue of whether the workers on 457 visas were receiving their correct entitlements.

The latest 457 visa application figures back the need for a crackdown. There were more than 105,000 people in Australia working on temporary 457 visas in January this year, an increase of 22% from the previous year.

The Federal Labor party is aware this is an issue and in March Prime Minister Julia Gillard announced that the 457 visa scheme for temporary overseas workers would be overhauled to stop rorting of the system. Like us, the Prime Minister was concerned that the temporary foreign worker program is being abused by employers and that Australian workers were missing out on jobs.

According to the government 457 visas will be tightened to ensure they are only used to address genuine skills shortages, and local

workers get a fair go.

Compliance and enforcement powers will also be boosted to stop employers rorting the program. In the construction sector there has been a 38 per cent rise in 457 visas issued, while jobs in this sector declined by 68,000 in the past 12 months.

Employers will be now be required to demonstrate they are nominating a position where there is a genuine shortage of workers. The English language requirements for certain positions will also be raised and businesses that use the program will be required to enforce existing training requirements.

It is heartening that the government is aware that there are many circumstances where people have the skills for the job but the work is taken by overseas workers, and they are making every effort to ensure that Australian workers come first.

For too long employers have used this as a lazy option, bringing in overseas workers rather than investing in apprentices and training for their workers. By not paying overseas workers their proper entitlements, they are also driving down wages and conditions.

WORLD Plumbing Day

World Plumbing Day is an international event held each year to celebrate the important role plumbing plays in the health and safety of our society.

International disasters such as the 2011 tsunami in Japan remind us how easy it is to take for granted the availability of safe drinking water and proper sanitation systems, until they fail to function properly.

According to figures released by the World Health Organisation

1.1 billion people lack access to a safe clean water supply and 2.6 billion do not have effective sanitation systems. The World Health Organisation estimates that the tragic result of this is that over 3 million children die each year as a result of diseases that could have been prevented if they had access to basic facilities.

There is nothing more important than clean drinking water and good basic sanitation to keep the

world and the people who inhabit it healthy and plumbers have a vital role to play in this effort.

In 1854 a British doctor proved that the source of an outbreak of cholera was water, rather than being airborne, which was the accepted wisdom of the time. He cured the outbreak and his discovery demonstrated how critical sanitation was to public health.

DID YOU KNOW:

- Did you know that 2.5 billion people don't have a clean toilet, that's one in 3 people who don't have a safe, clean or private toilet billion people defecate in the open
- World Toilet Day is held on 19 November and aims to highlight the plight of 2.5 billion people without access to a clean, private toilet. "I give a shit, do you?" is theme of the global awareness campaign.
- Sanitation is more important than independence- Mahatma Gandhi, 1925
- According to a poll of doctors and the public, the most significant health breakthrough of the last 150 years has been sanitation. The benefits of clean water and sewage disposal gained the most votes from 11,000 doctors and member of the public questioned by the British Medical Journal several years ago.



David Parkin - Guest Speaker





Dylan Di Martino

World Plumbing Day Celebrations at PICAC



The Plumbing Industry Climate Action Centre (PICAC) welcomed over 300 guests on Friday 8 March to celebrate World Plumbing Day.

Highlights of the day included the Plumbing Apprenticeship Skills Competition, the Plumbing Careers and Trades Expo and an art display of World Plumbing Council 'Water is Life' competition entrants.

Congratulations to Alex de Koeyer who won the 6 hour skills challenge, which was designed to test plumbing

and mechanical services knowledge and competency in practical demonstration. Competitors demonstrated an outstanding standard of craftsmanship, ensuring the future of the plumbing industry is in capable hands.

Work Safe also carried out health checks on practitioners and industry stakeholders throughout the day and students interested in a career in the plumbing industry visited our Careers Expo to gain an insight into the training and employment options available to them.



VETS students from Vic Uni



Matthew Bulat

Will you be ok in retirement?

Whether you are retiring in two years or 40 years, finding out if you have enough super is easy.

Cbus offers two straight forward calculators to help you create a projection of your retirement funds. It is as simple as visiting www.cbussuper.com.au and providing some very basic information about your current income.

Then in just a few minutes, you'll be able to see an example of what your super might be when you reach retirement. For those close to retirement, the Cbus calculator helps people considering a Transition to Retirement (TTR), a product that allows people to reduce their work hours and use their TTR income payments to top up their income.

If you then want to take further action, Cbus Financial Planners and Advisers are available to speak with you about the result over the phone or at a personal one-on-one meeting.



Three additional calculators will be rolled out over 2013, helping you with:

- Investment Choice selecting the right investment option for your super dollars;
- Contributions what could you do to assist your super grow; and
- Insurance which will indicate the level of insurance you require.

Cbus' Trustee:

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Cbus ABN 75 493 363 262

Read the relevant Cbus Product Disclosure Statement to decide whether Cbus is right for you.

Contact **1300 361 784** or visit www.cbussuper.com.au for a copy.



CEPUTEC, the Plumbing Technical Education Centre, conducts First Aid training courses throughout the year for our members. The First Aid course is a two day program which trains participants on the critical elements of initial response to an emergency in a range of scenarios.

Formerly called Level Two First Aid, this training course also includes how to safely provide Automated External Defibrillation (AED) until the arrival of medical assistance.

First aid workers need to demonstrate current competency every 12 months, due to industry requirements. This is a practical, hands on course.

For further information and course dates contact CEPUTEC on 03 9356 8902.

Changes to Superannuation

From July 1 2013 the Federal Government is putting in place improvements to superannuation. The super reforms will make our super system stronger and more efficient and will better protect the retirement savings of our current and future generations.

► Lost Super

Under the new My Super legislation, the definition of an inactive account will change. The current definition is accounts under \$200 which have not had a payment or have had returned mail sent to the fund. These accounts have their balance sent to the ATO.

Under the new definition it will increase to \$2,000 with inactive accounts to be sent to the ATO. This figure will be indexed to \$3,000 by July 2016.

What this means to members is that they will have to apply directly to the ATO for their lost accounts.

There are approximately 3,000,000 super accounts in Australia with 11,000,000 workers.

► Proposed changes - Raising the concessional cap

It is proposed that the cap would increase from \$25,000 to \$35,000. For members over 60 year this is proposed to take effect on the 1st July this year.

The cap would then be increased for members over 50 from \$25,000 to \$35,000 on the 1st July 2014.

And from the 1st July 2018 the cap for all members caps will increase to \$35,000.

There is a proposal that members that earn \$100,000 interest in an income stream would have to pay 15% tax on the interest. This is unlikely to effect many people as a member would have to have a very large account balance.

Another proposal is to put a 30% tax on super contributions for people that earn over \$300,000p.a, the current rate is set at 15%.

Check your Superannuation balances - are you being paid correctly?

PTEU Industrial Officer Paul Coffey has been in the role now for nearly a year and continues to work closely with officials, while focusing on the Enterprise Bargaining Agreements, industry award rates, member underpayments and unfair dismissals.

Paul advises members to make sure you check your superannuation balances regularly, as it is increasingly becoming an entitlement that employers are falling behind in paying.

“Check your super fund account on the internet, it’s in your best interests to know sooner rather than later if your employer is failing to pay. While the government provide a Super Guarantee, it often takes up to 18 months to get your money and is a long and drawn out process”.

“There is also an income protection component in your Superannuation which will be impacted if payments

haven’t been made, which would have a significant impact on members if they become hurt”.

Members can log on and check their accounts online: www.cbussuper.com.au, put in your cbus member number and then register online for a password. From there you can then log in and check your account balance and manage your fund.

Paul has also working with Fair Work Australia on a 2 yearly review of the Plumbing and Fire sprinklers award 2010.

“Even though it doesn’t apply to members on our EBA’s because their rates are set, it still a good thing to bump up the minimum rates when possible. I’ve spent over 20 days in the Commission trying to increase the award rates”.



Paul Coffey
Industrial Officer

Redundancy – what you need to do

If you are faced with being made redundant you must receive a "Separation Certificate" from your employer to claim from Incolink and to register for Centrelink payments.

The only form these organisations will accept are the government forms outlining your start and finishing dates.

Centrelink will need to know how much you were paid out in holiday pay and for how long, as they won't allow people to double dip and claim the dole payments when they have been paid holiday pay from their previous employer.

Once you have submitted your Separation certificate to Incolink, along with your claim form, they will pay you your initial first payment of \$4913.00 before tax.

To claim the remainder of what's in your account at Incolink you must prove that you have been actively looking for work.

Putting your name down on the unemployment list will assist you in making the final claim on all of your money.

All of the forms that you require can be found on the Incolink website www.incolink.org.au

Have you registered for the Genuine Redundancy Account ?

Workers who hold their redundancy funds with Incolink are now able to select how their redundancy funds are treated, by choosing to have their redundancy funds held in either an Incolink Severance/Redundancy Account (default account provided to Incolink members), or an Incolink's Genuine Redundancy Account (GRA).

Incolink's Genuine Redundancy Account can increase your after-tax redundancy entitlement by almost a third. Furthermore, your entire funds balance will be paid out when a claim is made. You can select to have your redundancy funds administered into a Genuine Redundancy Account at no cost. However, if an Incolink Genuine Redundancy Account is selected it cannot be reversed at a later date. Therefore, it is important

that you seek independent advice to assist in deciding if a Genuine Redundancy Account is right for you.

To select a Genuine Redundancy Account you will need to complete the Incolink Genuine Redundancy Application Form. There will be a 14 day cooling off period from when Incolink receives your application to change your account to an Incolink Genuine Redundancy Account. You must choose the Genuine Redundancy Account option PRIOR to your position being made redundant and, once chosen, you will be unable to change your account type at a later date.

If you require further information or assistance please contact Incolink's customer service staff on (03) 9639 3000.

Information provided by Incolink is of a general nature. We recommend you seek independent advice before selecting a Genuine Redundancy Account. Information is correct as of December 2012.

Get the New PTEU App for your phone

The PTEU now has a Mobile phone Application, the first of its kind in our industry.

This App will enable you to get information quickly and easily on your phone and works with all smartphones.

The App will provide you with a great way to keep up-to-date with current Union information, RDO's, upcoming events, etc. We know that when you're out and about you want fast easy access to our services, that's why we made this App.

How to get the PTEU App on your mobile:

This can be done one of three ways;

- 1 Visit www.pteu.asn.au on your mobile device
- 2 Google the PTEU on your mobile, then save the App to your phone
- 3 Scan the QR code pictured to download. You can download a FREE QR code reader in your online App Store.



- A toothless tiger

The recent tragic deaths of 3 people after the wall collapse on the Swanston Street footpath has brought the issue of safety into the forefront of the public's mind. These deaths are absolutely tragic, but what has largely gone unnoticed is the many injuries and deaths which have occurred in the construction industry under very similar circumstances. Unfortunately because these incidents occurred on worksites, they haven't received the same badly needed attention.

In 2009 plumber Keith Dickman fell from a ladder doing a relatively simple task that resulted in his death. Not a single notice (prohibition, improvement, non-disturbance) was given by the inspector on the day in regard to any breaches of the Act. This inaction made a prosecution doomed to failure as it indicated that no breach was evident at the time. The Coroner was scathing of the performance of the WorkSafe Authority at the hearing and the matter now before the DPP.

The Corners Court are fed up with the lack of professionalism shown by WorkSafe investigators when bringing evidence to their Courts. One positive outcome of the Dickman hearing was that following any future fatality WorkSafe were directed to liaise with the Corner within two weeks, to ensure

the delivery of all relevant information.

Les Butterworth was found dead on a construction site in Scoresby last year when a gate fell on him. I found out through freedom of information and his family that WorkSafe failed to proceed with a prosecution on a number of issues. Firstly because there was no Australian Standard on the particular type of gate that fell on Les. My point would be that WorkSafe is responsible for enforcing the Act, not Australian Standards. The second reason given for failure to prosecute was the supposed head injuries sustained in the incident which would made it inconclusive to prosecute. The autopsy only mentions/refers to neck and chest injury, no head injuries, so this seems to be a massive oversight/mistake error by Worksafe. Les's son is a member of our union, and he wants answers.

I believe the problems with WorkSafe arise from a number of areas. Firstly they are not adequately resourced to pursue prosecutions, both financially and professionally, a problem created by both sides of politics because neither side wants to be seen throwing fines at employers. The Authority is prepared to allow employers and Industry to self regulate as opposed to self administer the Act.

My experience with WorkSafe is that they will only take on a case which is guaranteed to succeed, they openly admit this. The regulator will step away from any issue that seems to be politically sensitive, ie, Grocon and the current union stance with this employer. An Inspector may visually inspect the hoarding and see the issues at hand, but will more than likely walk away and leave it to Industry, as this is its method of operation.



Steve Rocco
OH&S Officer

Woolworths & Austral – pushing refrigeration wages down

After months of ongoing negotiations we are currently at a stalemate with Woolworths.

In January 2013 Woolworths bought out Austral Refrigeration, after the company went into receivership. Woolworths are now essentially holding their employees to ransom, with the guys still waiting for a pay increase 18 months later.

While everyone in the industry now has EBA's signed at 4%, the only ones not signing are Woolworths. They want to sign an agreement that's 3% lower than the industry, treating the refrigeration mechanics like they do their shelf stackers, cleaners, bakers and butchers. Our guys are specialised contractors and should be treated as such.

There is an industry standard that we fought for 10 years, and these guys shouldn't be treated any differently.

Woolworths have taken over and now want the lowest paid employees to be paid 3% below the industry standard.

Our members, who we represent, are highly skilled, hold multiple licences, have done 4 year apprenticeships. They do everything from electronics, to sheet metal, plumbing and refrigeration, so there's a number of facets to their trade, they're not just like someone who puts groceries on a shelf.

In mid May we took an in principal vote to see if the blokes would be happy to take 4% on the base or 3% across the board and it was 100% unanimous that they wanted the 4% on the base.

Issues have also arisen in Woolworths Tarneit and Melton stores after they stood down 4 of our members, one of which is our Union delegate. They've essentially stood down their own employees and then brought in subcontractors and labour hire to do

the work. This is blatant discrimination against our members.

We believe we've become just another group of workers who Woolworths want to dictate to and have no real negotiation with. They sacked their Transport worker members, they're driving farmers into the ground with their prices and now they're looking to do the same to refrigeration mechanics.

I believe this is nothing to do with negotiating anymore, their actions are saying to us "We're Woolworths and we're not going to be told what to do by a union". We don't think they're bargaining in good faith.



Norm Kelly
Northern Suburbs
Organiser



INJURED?

WE HELP PTEU MEMBERS FIGHT BACK.

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TO MEMBERS & FAMILIES

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CONSULTATION

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WILL

■ NO WIN,
NO FEE*

*CONDITIONS APPLY

FOR FREE LEGAL ADVICE, CONTACT MAURICE BLACKBURN.

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**WE
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Union Assist free help and advice when you're injured

As a member of the Plumbing Trades Employees Union, did you know that if you're injured at work you can access free WorkCover information and conciliation support?

The PTEU and Union Assist will provide you with experienced advisers to help with your WorkCover disputes at the conciliation stage.

Union Assist can help you challenge a decision made about your WorkCover claim by explaining your rights and obligations under WorkCover and assisting with your conciliation from start to finish.

If you get sick or injured at work, we suggest you do the following

- Report your injury
- See your own doctor
- You must attend all doctors' appointments specified by the insurance company
- We recommend that you do not talk to a WorkCover investigator as there is no legal requirement to do so. If approached, ring the PTEU or Union Assist first.

Here are some examples of how Union Assist has helped members:

1. A plumber was bitten by a spider at work, with a serious injury resulting in amputation and reoccurring symptoms. The claim was accepted, but then some time later the insurance company terminated payments. Union Assist helped the worker through the Accident Compensation Conciliation Service (ACCS) process which resulted in a favourable medical panel decision and the worker receiving ongoing payments and treatment.
2. A middle aged worker suffered a serious injury at work. He was asked not to make a claim and told that his wages would continue to be paid.

He was driven to hospital well away from worksite and after a considerable stay in hospital, some weeks later his wages stopped. The worker then went to make a claim but was denied on the basis that the injury did not occur at work. Union Assist challenged the decision, working through the dispute at ACCS. Together with assistance from union and solicitors, they ultimately established the claim.



The Plumbing trades Employees Union, working with Union Assist, provides expert advisers to help you with your WorkCover disputes at the conciliation stage.

The Union Assists service is available to Union members. Members are required to get a referral from the PTEU, this is a free service to financial members simply call 96623388.

The Plumbers Union would like to acknowledge the excellent work done by Union Assist in representing our members ,UA provides WorkCover assistance at the Accident Compensation Conciliation Service (ACCS) and general advice to members. info@unionassist.org.au Phone: 9639 6144 fax: 9639 6155



Plumbers play key role in developing world class facility

Biotechnology giant CSL is investing over 88 million dollars in a project at its Melbourne manufacturing site in Broadmeadows.

The project, which started in November 2011, sees plumbers playing a vital role in developing the new facility, which will manufacture Privigen, CSL's intravenous immunoglobulin treatment for people whose immune system does not function properly.

This is a world class facility, requiring highly specialised labour and skills, which our members are providing. This project also highlights the quality workmanship undertaken by our members, in a very high tech field.

There are 230 people currently working on the project, 60 % of

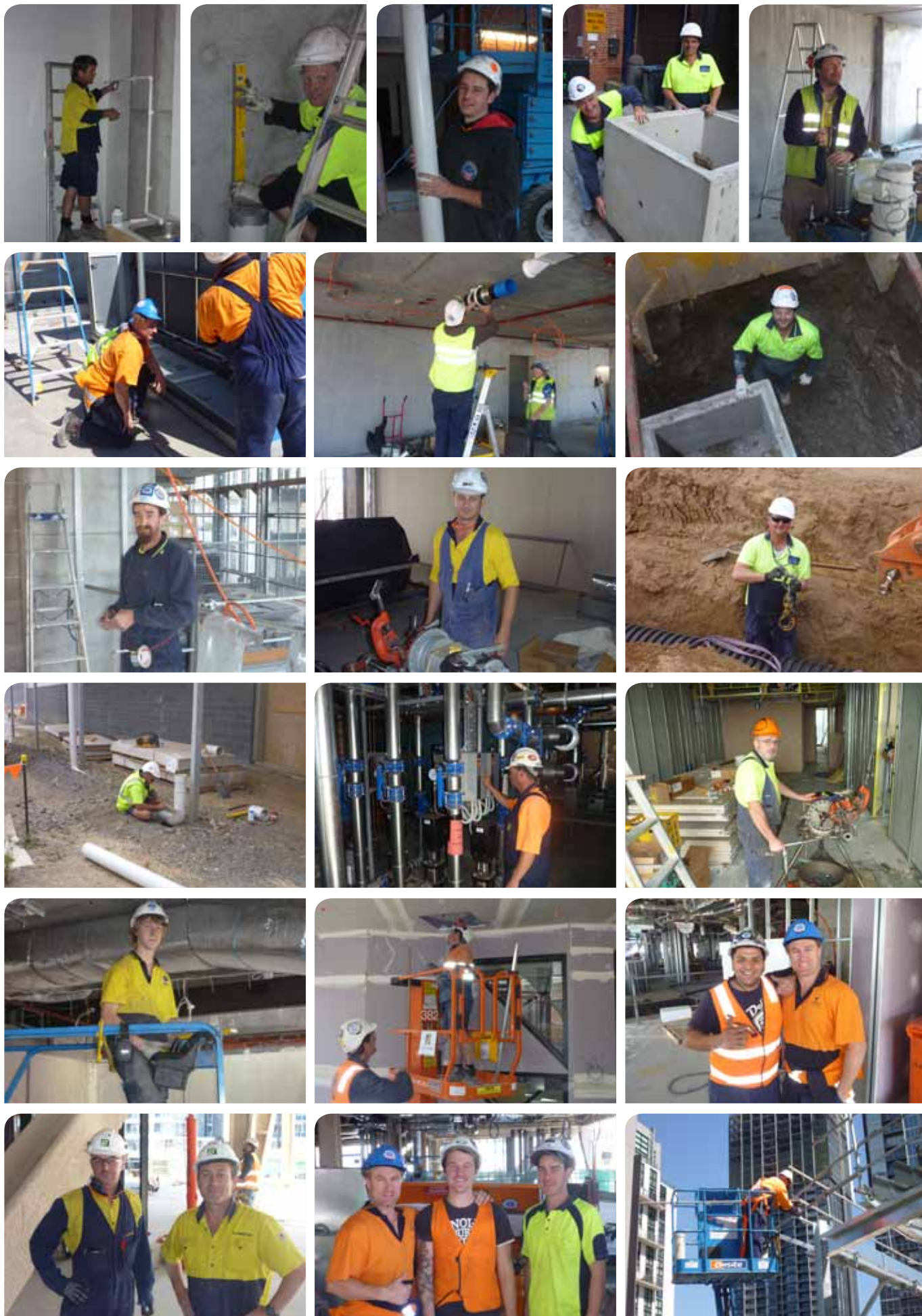
these plumbers. By the end of the development, which is scheduled for completion in late 2013, over 800 plumbers will have worked on the job.

Seventeen plumbing contractors have worked on the project, including: Project Developments, Syfon, Allstaff, Vic Insulations, Academy Roofing, Signal & Hobbs, Fire Solutions, Egan & Stewart, M&W Group, Allan Insulations, Quadrant Mechanical, Radiant Stainless Steel, Trio Plumbing, Lab Systems, Wooster Plumbing, Farleys Plumbing and Total Insulations.



Norm Kelly
Northern Suburbs
Organiser





Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA)

Recent legislation has resulted in substantial changes to the Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) rules that apply to most LAFHA benefits provided on or after 1 October 2012. There are four key changes to understand:

1. Employees are required to maintain a home in Australia at which they usually reside and that is available for their immediate use and enjoyment whilst they are living away from home (LAFH).
 - a. The employee or the employee's spouse must have an ownership interest in the home. This includes either owning or renting, but not living at home with parents.
 - b. The home must be available for their immediate use and enjoyment at all times while LAFH. The home cannot be rented out while LAFH.
 - c. It must be reasonable to expect that the employee will resume living at the home when they cease LAFH.
2. Access to the tax concessions for LAFHA is limited to a period of 12 months at a particular work location.
 - a. The 12 months do not have to be consecutive, and can be paused (i.e. when taking leave)
 - b. Changes to the conditions of employment (i.e. promotion) does not activate a new 12 month period.
 - c. A transfer between associated employers will not reset the 12 month period.
3. To access to the tax concessions for LAFHA employees must be able to substantiate all expenses incurred on accommodation and all expenses incurred on food and drink (if the food or drink expenses incurred are more than the ATO's reasonable amounts - \$42 a week for each adult).
4. Employees must provide their employer with additional declarations about LAFH and substantiation of expenses (employers would supply these to their employees).

Points 1 and 2 above are not required to be substantiated under the following circumstances:

- a) Where the employee is LAFH on a fly-in fly-out or drive-in drive-out basis
- b) Where the "transitional rules" apply.

The "transitional rules" apply where the arrangement to provide certain LAFHA to an employee was entered into before 8 May 2012. The transitional rules apply until 1 July 2014.



LAFHA or Travel Allowance?

It is generally accepted that an employee will be travelling on work where they are away from home for a period not exceeding 21 days. However, other factors to consider when making the distinction between LAFHA or a travel allowance are:

Travel Allowances	Living Away From Home Allowances
The existing work location continues to be the employee's regular place of work.	The employee has established a second temporary work location.
The employee is generally not accompanied by family members.	The employee is accompanied by one or more family members.
The employee takes travel items.	The employee takes residential belongings.
Temporary style accommodation is used while away from home (i.e. a hotel or motel).	Fixed style accommodation is used while away from home.

What are the tax implications for employees?

Tax implication to employee	Travel Allowances	Living Away From Home Allowances
Income tax	Taxed at employee's marginal rates	None
Fringe Benefits Tax ("FBT")	N/A	May be subject to concessional FBT treatment - The taxable value of the LAFHA fringe benefit depends on the circumstances of the employee.

There are numerous factors to consider when determining the tax implications for your personal affairs. We therefore strongly suggest seeking independent taxation advice from a professional advisor.



Tax Guide 2013

What can you typically claim?

This Guide has been prepared by the PTEU for union members to help you prepare your tax return, and is based on information from the ATO website.

We encourage you to seek advice from registered and reputable tax agents, as personal circumstances may impact on the guidance provided below.

What are some of the work related expenses you can typically claim?

1 Union Fees, Licences, Insurance

Union fees including arrears. The cost of renewing your licences and certificates that relate to your work (but not your drivers licence). You cannot claim the cost of obtaining your initial licence or certificate. The cost of sickness and accidental insurance premiums that relate to your work.

2 Work clothes, laundry & dry-cleaning

The cost of buying, renting, repairing and cleaning a compulsory uniform (a compulsory uniform is a set of clothing that, worn together, identified you as an employee of an organisation having a strictly enforced policy that makes it compulsory for you to wear the uniform while at work), or a single item of compulsory clothing (usually clothing with the employer's logo permanently attached). Generally you can only claim a deduction if the allowance has been spent in gaining your assessable income and you can substantiate your claim.

3 Motor vehicle expenses

The expense of using your car for work purposes may be claimed as a deduction in any of the following circumstances:

- Transporting bulky tools and equipment between home and work if there is no secure area at work to store them;
- Direct travel between one place of work to another.

4 Transport costs

This may include parking fees (not fines) and toll fares – to the extent they were incurred for work related purposes (see item 3 above).

5 Cost of managing tax affairs

Costs incurred to assist you with the preparation of your income tax return are deductible (e.g. tax agent fee).

6 Phones

The work related part of the rental cost or depreciation on the purchase cost (but not the connection fee) of answering machines, mobile phones, pagers and other telecommunication equipment. You cannot claim a deduction for the rental or purchase costs if they are supplied by your employer or any other person. The cost of work related telephone calls. The cost of your telephone rental if you can

show that you are on call or regularly required to telephone your employer while you are away from the workplace.

7 Equipment & tools

The cost of safety equipment such as harnesses, goggles, breathing masks and helmets. The work related part of the depreciation on the cost of the tools and equipment you use for work. How you calculate your deduction may vary depending on when you bought an item and how much it cost. You can also claim a deduction for the cost of repairing and insuring tools and equipment to the extent that you use them for work. You can claim a deduction for the cost of sunglasses, sunhats and sunscreen lotions if the nature of your work requires you to work in the sun for all or part of the day and you use these items to protect yourself from the sun while at work.

8 Overtime Meals

You can only claim for overtime meal expenses incurred on those occasions when you worked overtime and you received an overtime meal allowance for that overtime which you included as income at item 2 on your tax return. An amount for overtime meals that has been folded in as part of your normal salary or wage income is not considered to be an overtime meal allowance.

9 Self-Education and training expenses

The cost of first-aid training courses if you, as a designated first aid person, are required to undertake first-aid training to assist in emergency work situations. You cannot claim a deduction if your employer paid for the course or the cost was reimbursed to you. The cost of attending seminars, conferences and training courses that are sufficiently connected to your work activities at the time the expenses were incurred, provided your employer or any other person did not reimburse you the costs. The cost of street directories, log books, diaries, pens and other stationery items to the extent that you use them for work. The cost of journals, periodicals and magazines that have a content specifically related to your employment as a building worker.

? Where can you obtain more information?

More information can be found on the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) website – refer “Plumber employees – claiming work-related expenses” <http://www.ato.gov.au/content/00322834.htm>

Are You Entitled to Long Service Leave?



In most industries, to be entitled to long service leave you have to accrue a minimum of seven years service with a single employer. However in the construction industry, you may find yourself working with many employers over the same time frame. For this reason, a portable long service leave scheme has been established by each State and Territory Government in Australia, exclusively for construction workers.

Essentially these schemes allow you to carry your long service benefits from employer to employer. It doesn't matter how many employers you've worked for, you can still enjoy the long service leave benefits that you're entitled to.

Interstate work can also count towards your total long service leave. Each interstate scheme has its own benefits and qualifying period. For example, Victorian workers are entitled to 9.1 weeks of leave after 7 years of service.

In Victoria, CoINVEST has been making long service leave payments to workers and working subcontractors in the construction industry for 32 years. During this time more than \$450 million has been paid in long service leave claims to workers in the construction industry.

CoINVEST covers workers and apprentices employed on residential, commercial or industrial projects. This includes all full time, part time and casual workers as well as self-employed and labour workers. Workers in the construction industry can check whether they can be registered with CoINVEST by visiting www.coinvest.com.au for a full list of all work occupations covered.

Based on the scheme, employers are required to register each of their workers with CoINVEST and submit their Workers' Days and Wages Forms quarterly together

with the contribution. The scheme is underpinned by state legislation and it is compulsory for all workers and employers to be registered with CoINVEST.

To register or check if you are entitled to long service leave, contact CoINVEST today on 03 9664 7666.

Are you a worker or a sub contractor?- make sure you're not missing out on entitlement

There is a growing trend for companies and businesses to hire individuals as sub contractors, rather than employ workers, in an effort to avoid financial obligations and benefits such as your Long Service Leave payments.

With an increase in sub contractors, some employers are making their own contractual arrangements to avoid paying entitlements (i.e. paying their worker as you would a working subcontractor but treating them as a worker). If you are in fact a worker but registered and paid as a working subcontractor, you could be missing out on a number of these benefits.

It is important that all workers and subcontractors understand how they are engaged with their employer, in order to determine whether they are in fact a worker or sub contractor.

Essentially, a sub contractor is an independent person who works for other businesses on a case by case basis, and is paid according to their results, usually at the end of each project. A worker is employed by a company or a business and the work they carry out each day is determined by their employer. A worker also tends to be paid by the hour or day and is part of the employer's overall business.

For further information on determining whether you are in fact a worker or a working subcontractor, contact CoINVEST's Membership Services Team on 03 9664 7666.

If you're injured

- it's your right to go to your own doctor

According to PTEU OH&S Officer Chris Giblin, there are certain builders out there and Doctors Clinics who are camouflaging and downplaying injury statistics, seriously taking advantage of the system.

"We've seen guys who go to a Clinic, are given 20 stitches in their hand and then told to go back to work on normal duties. We've even had someone sent back to work who was later found to have broken bones who was told by the doctor originally to return to work."

"Some of our contractors are pushed by the builders to ensure injured workers are back on site next day, because if you don't lose the full day, it's not recorded as a Lost Time Injury, masking the injury statistics. The other offshoot of this is that it masks the Worksafe statistic, so they're thinking 'How good are we', when the reality is a lot of these injuries are being swept under the carpet".

"Bridge Street Clinic in Port Melbourne is the worst for workers, they will always send them back to work, 'fit for duties'. The only conclusion I can draw is that the builders have got together and said to the doctors 'If you send them back, we'll manage them on-site'".

"What I want our members to do is exercise their right to go to their own doctor. If you have to go to a specified clinic to get treatment because you have been instructed by your employer then do so, but once you've had first aid treatment and are stabilised, you have the right to see your own doctor.

There has also been an increase in employers trying to self manage claims, not putting in a workers compensation claim, instead directly paying money to the injured person.

Unfortunately there will be the odd case which is more serious than

people previous thought and a few months down the track further doctors visits or tests will be required and the boss will then decide to put it into the hands of WorkSafe.

The consequences of this are that the injured worker is now several months behind in the system, the claim has to still be acknowledged, which can take up a month, and no one will let them have any treatment until they go through that process. Then invariably they'll be sent to an independent medical panel.

"I've seen guys wait for 6-9 months for basic treatment, while WorkSafe and the insurers conduct an investigation into navel-gazing."



Chris Giblin
OH&S Officer



Bowel Cancer

the 2nd biggest cancer killer in Australia

Bowel cancer, also known as colorectal cancer, occurs in the colon or rectum. More than 3600 Victorian men and women are diagnosed with bowel cancer each year and more than 1/3 of them die from it.

What's important to note is that 90% of bowel cancers can be cured if found early, then the chance of successful treatment and long-term survival improves significantly.

What are the symptoms?

Not all bowel cancers show symptoms, however you should see your doctor if you notice:

- Bleeding from the bottom, or any sign of blood after a bowel motion
- A change in usual bowel habits, such as straining (constipation) to go the toilet or loose motions (diarrhoea)
- Abdominal pain or bloating
- Weight loss for no obvious reason, or loss of appetite
- Symptoms of anaemia - including unexplained tiredness, weakness or breathlessness

Who is at risk?

Everyone is at risk of developing bowel cancer, however the risk greatly increases with age. Some people may be at greater risk of developing bowel cancer, including those with:

- A previous history of polyps in the bowel
- A previous history of bowel cancer
- Chronic inflammatory bowel disease (eg. Crohn's disease)
- A strong family history of bowel cancer
- Increased insulin levels or type 2 diabetes.

If you have an increased risk of developing bowel cancer, you should discuss possible surveillance options with your doctor.

Detecting bowel cancer- Faecal Occult Blood Test

The Faecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) is a simple screening that looks for hidden traces of blood in a bowel motion. It can help detect bowel cancer in its early stages, before symptoms occur. An FOBT can be done at home by taking tiny samples from two bowel motions using a test kit. People should have an FOBT every two years from 50 years of age.

How much does bowel screening cost?

An FOBT from your doctor or pharmacist should cost you between \$30-\$40.



What else can I do to reduce my risk?

Bowel cancer is one of the most preventable cancers. Many lifestyle factors may contribute to bowel cancer. Your most effective protection against bowel cancer is to:

- Be screened every two years
- Get 30 to 60 minutes moderate to vigorous intensity exercise per day
- Maintain a healthy body weight
- Eat a well balanced diet
- Avoid processed and burnt meat. Limit red meat intake to three to four times per week
- Avoid or limit your alcohol intake
- Quit smoking

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your doctor call the Cancer Council Helpline on 13 11 20.



Plumbers Union Merchandise & Order Form

52 Victoria Street
Carlton South VIC 3053

Ph: 03 9662 3388

Fax: 03 9663 2613

Email: reception@pteu.asn.au

Use the order form below to order by mail, email or fax

 ZIP UP	 HIGH VIS ZIP UP	 GREY HOODIE	 HOODIE	 PTEU ZIP UP
 ZIP UP HOODIE	 PTEU SHIRT	 WORK SHIRT	 SAFETY VEST	
 CASUAL SHIRT (1)	 CASUAL SHIRT (2)	 SKULL SHIRT	 CAP	 PTEU CAP
 BEANIE	 STUBBY HOLDER	 FLAG	 WATCH	

Merchandise Order Form

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Address: _____

City: _____ Post code: _____

Mobile: _____

Email: _____

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☐ Cash ☐ Cheque ☐ Credit Card

Name on card: _____

Card Number: _____

Expiry Date: _____ / 20____

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Item	Size	Price	Quantity	Total
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High Vis Zip Up		\$50.00		
Grey Hoodie		\$50.00		
Hoodie		\$50.00		
PTEU Zip Up		\$50.00		
Zip Up Hoodie		\$50.00		
PTEU Shirt		\$26.00		
Work Shirt		\$35.00		
Safety Vest		\$35.00		
Casual Shirt (1)		\$26.00		
Casual Shirt (2)		\$26.00		
Skull Shirt		\$26.00		
Cap	one size fits all	\$10.00		
PTEU Cap	one size fits all	\$10.00		
Beanie	one size fits all	\$10.00		
Stubby Holder	-----	\$5.00		
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Watch	one size fits all	\$50.00		
			TOTAL	\$

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