BLUE MOUNTAINS UNIONS & COMMUNITY ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Trade unionism continues to evolve and this year we changed our name to reflect this. Our initials remain the same but BMUC now stands for **Blue Mountains Unions and Community**. It's a first step to making it clear that unions aren't separate from the rest of society, but an integral part of the community and we invite the rest of the community to join us in our fight for a better life. Our name and banner may have changed but our basic aims remain the same : to advance unionism, living standards, social justice, working conditions and the goal of full employment. Towards these ends the BMUC staged four **Politics-in-the-Pub** events this year:

25th March **Guaranteed! Jobs or a Full Income**: focussed on one of the great debates of our time - with Dr John Tomlinson putting the case for a basic income and Dr. Victor Quirk from Newcastle University examining the argument for full employment.

29th April **Deaths at Work** was held in honour of workers who've died as a result of occupational accidents or illnesses. Our key speakers were Rita Malia, President of the CFMEU Construction Division NSW; Emma Maiden ,assistant secretary of Unions NSW and Rowan Kernebone, co-ordinator of the Injured Workers Support Network

25th July **Internships and Wage Thefts**. With growing evidence of exploitation of young workers this event at Springwood's Oriental Hotel focussed on internships, wage theft and under payment. Keynote speakers: Mike Morey, secretary Unions NSW; Dimity Mannering, Executive Director of Interns Australia and Michael Whaites, NSW Nurses and Midwives Association.

2 September: **The Great Coal Cover Up?** featured Dr. Sujata Allan and Dr. Richard Stiles from Doctors for the Environment warning of the health risks from air pollution from the mining , burning and transport of coal. They argue that covering coal wagons and regulating dirty diesel locomotives will reduce air pollution.

Sally McManus: The new secretary of the ACTU, Sally McManus provided another highlight of the year, giving an inspirational speech to BMUC members

on how trade unionists need to play a pivotal role in restoring a fair go to the workplace and wider community.

Earlier at the annual **Winter Magic Festival** in Katoomba the BMUC stall concentrated on one of the great challenges to many lowly paid workers in the Blue Mountains - the prospect of having their Sunday penalties reduced. Members of the public were so keen to sign the petition to the Prime Minister in support of penalties that at one stage we ran out, and a quick trip to the printers was required to replenish supplies. At the end of the day over 1,200 had signed the petition.

Other events our members supported during the year included the annual **May Day Parade** in Sydney and the 30th birthday party for the Solidarity Choir.

BMUC Blog . Since Mark Gregory started the blog it's recorded 347,971 views. Last December there were 9,000 views for the month.

Face book and Twitter: The number of followers continues to grow:

Twitter 2,100

Face book 422

As ever our secretary Deb Smith played a key role in keeping the BMUC running smoothly. Earlier this year Deb had to step down because of illness. She is in many ways the heart and soul of the BMUC and we wish her the very best for a full recovery. In the meantime we thank Rowan Kernebone for agreeing to act as secretary for the remainder of the year.

Thanks also go to the Family Hotel in Katoomba and the Oriental Hotel in Springwood for providing venues for Politics in the Pub; Doug Cameron's office for helping with communications, Susan and Peter Lammiman for again generously opening up their home for our annual Christmas party, and the other members of the executive for their work throughout the year.

Kerry Cooke

President BMUC

7th September 2017