

SUBJECT: LMM 01/05/18 - INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' DAY 2018

MOTION

That Newcastle City Council:

- 1 Notes that 1 May 2018 marks the occasion of International Workers' Day 2018, otherwise known as Labour Day, or May Day;
- 2 Recognises that International Workers' Day is an important occasion to recognise the role of workers and the organised Labour movement in achieving significant workplace rights such as an eight hour working day, annual leave, sick and carers leave, long service leave, maternity leave, superannuation, penalty rates, health and safety and workers' compensation, meal and rest breaks, collective bargaining and equal pay for women; leading to the quality of life that Novocastrians enjoy today;
- 3 Acknowledges that 28 April 2018 marked International Day of Mourning, remembering those who lost their life through a workplace incident or occupational disease.
- 4 Reaffirms our commitment to doing all that we can to ensure that every Novocastrian worker is safe and protected, and able to return home safely to their families after each day at work.

Background:

Newcastle has a long and proud tradition of being at the forefront of the fight for workers' rights in Australia, and throughout the world.

In May 1857, a speech by Superintendent Hodgson at the turning of the first sod at the new AA Company pit, led to the setting up of a 'union-club' by colliers in an open-air meeting near the present Baptist Church in Laman Street, Newcastle.¹

Referred to by 20th century authors as 'Borehole Lodge', this is almost certainly the Hunter's first 'trade union, marking over 160 years of workers organising to advocate for their interests, and health and safety in Newcastle.

Throughout those 160 years, trade unionists in Newcastle have been instrumental in many campaigns to advance the rights of workers. Novocastrians were at the forefront of the Eight-Hour Day in campaign in the late 1800s through to the early 1900s, which ultimately led to legislation enshrining workers the right for eight hours recreation, eight hours rest in an eight hour working day. Large scale demonstrations, rallies and marches took place in Newcastle throughout the eight-hour day campaign.

In modern times, Novocastrians played a large role in the 1998 Patrick dispute, led by the Maritime Union of Australia. The union movement recently marked the 20th Anniversary of the resolution of this dispute throughout Australian, including in Carrington, where a large scale community assembly was established in 1998 to support Patrick waterside workers who were unfairly removed from their jobs.

¹ Dr Bob James - Origins of the Hunter Labour Movement

Likewise, Novocastrians, including many of my fellow Newcastle Labor Councillors, played important roles in the fight against the infamous *Workchoices* legislation. *Workchoices* was ultimately defeated, thanks largely to the union movement, supported by the Australian Labor Party.

International Workers' Day - May Day

International Worker's Day, Labour Day, or May Day, is an internationally recognised celebration of workers' rights, marked by communities and trade unionists across the world annually on 1 May each year.

On April 21, 1856, stonemasons at the University of Melbourne marched to Parliament House to push for an eight-hour working day. An agreement with employers for a 48-hour week was eventually reached and Australian workers welcomed the new eight-hour day.

A victory march was held on in May 1856, and each year after that eventually moving into other states across Australia as an important annual event that remembers those who struggled and succeeded to ensure decent and fair working conditions in Australia.

Newcastle's first May Day was marked on May 3, 1894 by the Labor Electoral League at Wallsend, and continues to this day.

International Day of Mourning

On 28 April each year, countries around the world pause to commemorate workers who have died as a result of a workplace incident or occupational disease.

Each year, Unions NSW and SafeWork NSW hold a service on the day to honour and remember those who lost their life at work.

Unions NSW and SafeWork NSW encourage employers and workers across the state to take time on the International Day of Mourning to think about the significance of work health and safety and how workplace incidents can affect those around them.

I was humbled to join with local workers, unions and the community on Saturday, 28 April 2018, on behalf of the City of Newcastle at the Newcastle Workers' Memorial in Foreshore Park, to lay a wreath in remembrance of Novocastrian workers tragically killed or injured at work.

Source: SafeWork NSW website - <http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/about-us/international-day-of-mourning>

Attachments: Nil