



SECRETARY'S REPORT

2018

SUSAN RILEY
Secretary

Communication
Workers Union
Telecommunication
And Services Branch
Victoria



SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS 2018

Susan Riley
Secretary,
CWU (T&S) Victoria

Secretary's Report 2018

It is with great honour that I present the Branch Secretary's Annual Report to the Victorian T&S members for 2018.

In February this year and after some careful consideration, John Ellery resigned from the Secretary's position and reduced his working days to three. I stepped up accordingly, being appointed Secretary by our Branch Committee of Management on 6th February 2018. On that premise, John was appointed Branch Assistant Secretary (Honorary) and Industrial Officer.

It's been an eventful year so far – because there's never a dull moment in the life of a Union official!

2018 is the year of Enterprise Bargaining Agreement's. Early this year the ESTA (Emergency Services Telecommunications Authority) Admin/Support Agreement reached 'in principle' agreement. Unfortunately, the State Government prolonged the approval process and it is only being voted upon now; it will then be certified at the Fair Work Commission. The Telstra, ESTA Operational, Optus, ACMA and NBN Co Agreements are all being negotiated or finalised this year.

Branch Personnel

There has been no change to our Branch Committee of Management Executive or members over the last 12 months.

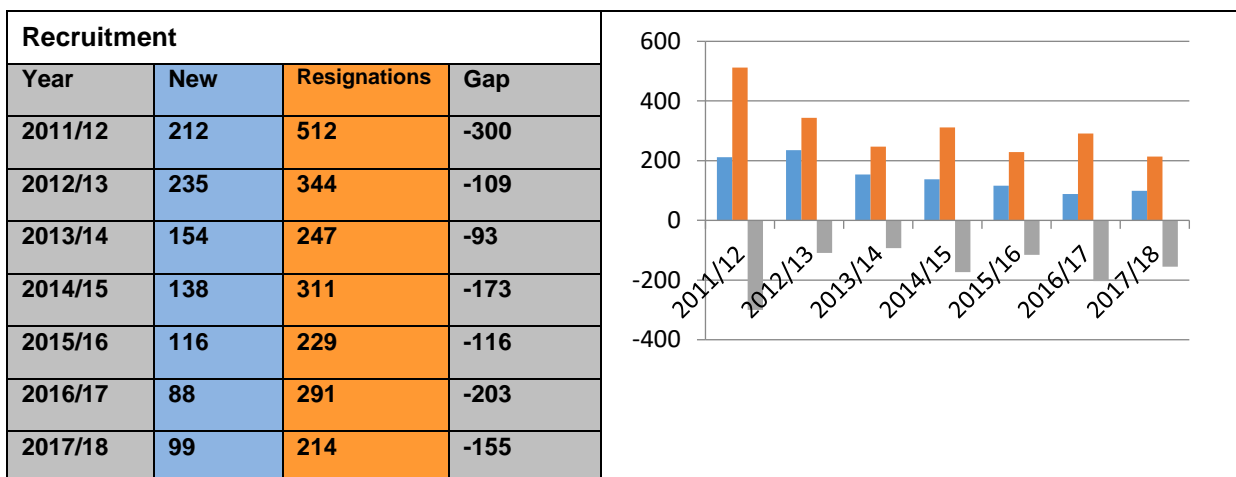
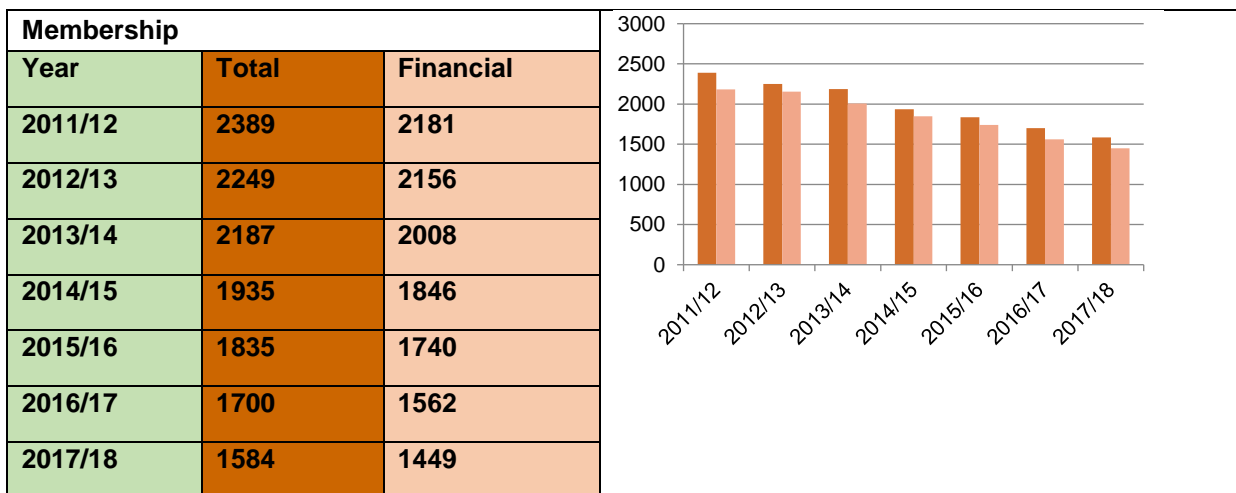
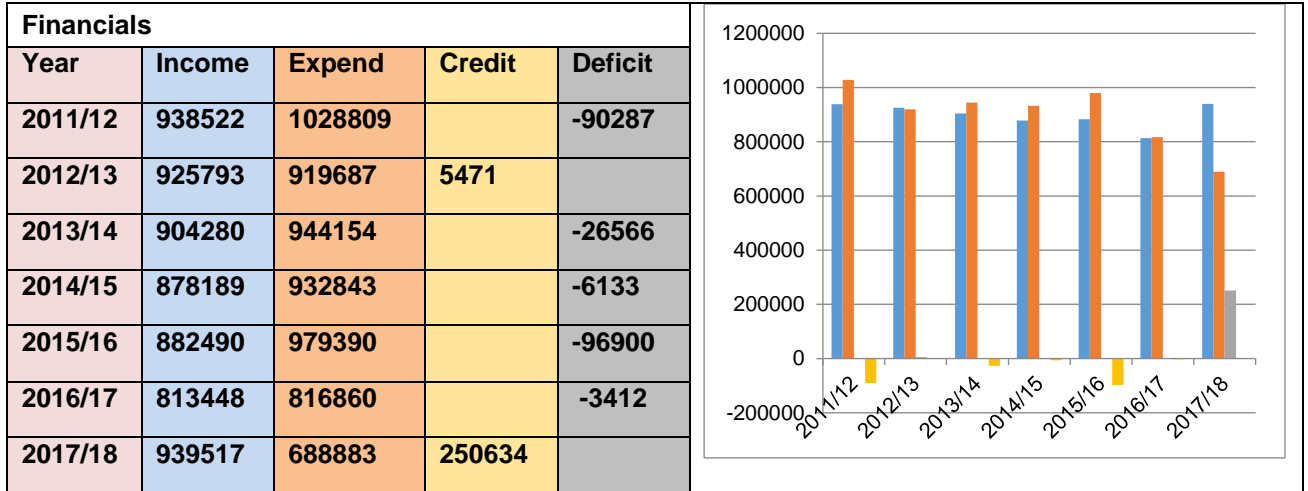
Our office administration is solely managed by Sharon Benson who maintains the membership, accounts and everything else. Our other admin person - Trish Willoughby, took redundancy in August 2017.

Financial Report

The branch financial position has steadily improved, notwithstanding reduced income due to membership decline, which is predominately due to job losses within Telstra. We have carefully managed our expenses and demonstrated an underlying profit of \$59k this financial year. NOTE: Our financial report notes a \$250k profit, however if you refer to note 3D you will see a contribution from Divisional Office of \$190k due to the redundancy and entitlements payment. Our staffing expenses have been and will be further decreased due to reduced hours and pay cuts. This is to counteract the carnage of Telstra job culling which will impact our membership enormously over the next few years. Whilst grappling with

continued interference from the Divisional Office, we have incurred more litigation expenses regarding the redundancy matter. (See further report.)

Capitation funds payable to the Divisional Office are reduced from 22.5% to 20% nationally. This is a result of rule changes that occurred last year. We will start to see the benefit progressively throughout the next financial year.



Focus Areas

ESTA

ESTA is the main growth area in membership, and as an employer, redundancies are rare. Union density is significant even though there are three unions who cover ESTA. We are invited to attend new employee inductions, which is also rare these days - in the private sector. The success in membership has been through consistent union presence fighting the daily battles, attending committee meetings, representing individual members and also the highly respected, quality, and hardworking delegates.

There are two Enterprise Agreements to negotiate, Administrative and Operational. For the first time ever, the Administration members undertook industrial action upon expiry of the Agreement to achieve their desired results, only to be delayed by tardy Government departments in approval. Each negotiation demands substantial time and effort, however, wages and conditions are always improved, albeit constrained by Government wage policy. We are currently in negotiations for the Operational Agreement and endeavour to settle on threshold claims to gain agreement before caretaker mode this October.

TELSTRA

Telstra have consistently reduced their workforce by way of redundancies over the last 20 years or so, however not as dramatic as the announcement in July this year of 9,500 job losses. The outlook for secure employment is bleak at Telstra. The establishment of 'InfraCo' means some will be redeployed but their future conditions are uncertain without knowledge of what exactly that may look like.

Directly following the announcement to the ASX, and then to employees Telstra decided to cut and run from the negotiations mid-stream! They tried unsuccessfully to introduce a new clause regarding transfer of business that undermines the redundancy provisions to existing employees, whilst offering a meagre 1.5% pay increase or pay cut. Our Branch led the way with an aggressive VOTE NO campaign. The resonant result of 81% endorsing the NO vote was overwhelming. Telstra were forced to retreat back to negotiations. Since then, Telstra declared the 1.5% pay increase will still occur on 1st October 2018 to workstream employees and 1.5% to be shared amongst job family employees.

We remain hopeful for meaningful discussions before expiry in November this year, and potential Industrial Action. Combating a ruthless CEO, outsourcing and sham contracting of permanent jobs continues. When will it end?

OPTUS

Optus are closely following in Telstra's footsteps with their announcement of 400 plus job losses. The majority are in NSW and middle management, however, we will see an adverse effect in Victoria too. The Optus EPA negotiations will commence soon.

AUSTRALIA POST

Our members in Australia Post are technicians who are constantly battling with management over rostering. The current roster pattern is under pressure due to significant redundancies over the last few years, combined with the installation of new mail sorting equipment that has limited maintenance window opportunity. This puts pressure on safe roster design, and currently, roster patterns are being developed that will be put on the table for the members to vote on.

ACMA/NBN Co/TANDEM

Enterprise Agreements have been finalised and voted on for ACMA, and NBN Co. Visionstream negotiations commence shortly.

“Tandem” sub- contractors still continue to raise issues relating to workload, KPI’s and other matters. The ongoing issue of Sham Contracting is still to be resolved.

Reports on Current Litigation

Registered Organisation Commission (ROC)

The ROC has commenced an investigation and pursued litigation against the CEPU, including our Branch. In total there were some 82 alleged contraventions of which our branch involvement was 2 alleged contraventions. We see them to be somewhat minor being a number of days late informing the ROC of a BCOM vacancy (but not late on the consequential filling of the vacancy) in 2017 and one other that is not supported by the facts. The other contraventions are with the Western Australian branch (Communications) and the Electrical and Plumbing Divisions. We are being represented by counsel arranged by CEPU. To date, it has not been heard.

Divisional Office

In February, (day one-minute one of my new position) the Branch Committee of Management and I were served documents filed in the Federal Court of Australia.

In December 2017, the Divisional Office (Communications) paid the monies owed our employee for accrued entitlements and retrenchment payment. This occurred because they are ultimately responsible under the Rules and the CEPU had disallowed our Branch in utilising funds from our Investment Portfolio. (Also the subject of litigation in 2016.)

Following this, the Divisional Executive (Communications) enforced ‘a loan’ upon our branch by way of passing a motion at a surprise DE meeting called with 4 hours’ notice. As we had no ability to defend the outrageous suggested amount nor speak to an alternative way forward, the motion was passed. After some communication back and forth in December 2017, the Divisional Secretary filed a suit at the Federal Court. We have no alternative as Respondents but to defend our position. We have had Mediation which did not resolve the matter and we await further Case Management Hearing.

Where to from here?

In 2006, the CEPU imposed a motion on the Victorian T&S Branch that impacted our ability to withdraw funds from our Investment Account. It stated that the usage was to be only for accommodation purposes, recruitment and growth. Later on in 2006, the Divisional Executive at the time passed a motion stating that the Investment funds could also be used for staff entitlements. This motion has not been recognised by the CEPU.

The Branch’s manner of handling decline in membership has been to cut costs in every way possible. It’s been a catch 22 because we are under resourced and unable to turn much needed attention to recruitment in order to grow.

We have developed a strategy to address the decline in membership and written a comprehensive Business Case which outlines potential growth areas and demonstrates capacity to achieve results when dedicated resources are applied. We hope to employ a

recruiter to assist in membership and lessen financial strain on the branch. This is currently with the National Secretary of the CEPU and we hope it will be circulated amongst the National Councillors for their consideration. The Business Case is available here tonight for your perusal or upon request.

Thank You

Thank you to John Ellery for his advice, assistance and expertise; to Sharon Benson who has taken on additional work and keeps the place running, Trish Willoughby who worked for us for over 40 years and is greatly missed, and Maureen Parker who has supported us in a voluntary manner to follow up on outstanding membership debts.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our Branch Committee and Executive members for their ongoing commitment and dedication in facilitating a well-functioning management of the Branch.

Finally to our delegates who often commit their personal time and dedication to achieve good outcomes for all members.

To our members; keep fighting the good fight.

In Unity,

Susan Riley
Secretary

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