



THE OILWORKER

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From the Chair Brothers and Sisters,

As I watch the snow fall outside my window and survey the white landscape, I want to caution everyone to take some extra time as they go about their daily chores and be sure to dress for the weather. Sitting on the tarmac at the Houston Hobby airport for over two hours as we waited to get deiced (they have two deicing vehicles for the airport) I am reminded that this is unusual weather for a number of our members.

Many pieces of equipment, particularly instrumentation, behave differently in this weather, so be on the lookout for anomalies. Expecting the unexpected is a good strategy.

In December 2017, I attended Unite's National Industrial Sector Conference. Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey addressed the joint plenary sessions. I participated in a couple of workshop sessions that pertain to our oil sector as well as some more general worker-issue breakout meetings. The opportunity to share our common concerns and continue to build support for our respective unions was invaluable. Without a common multinational perspective, we cannot expect to build the union.

Also in December, we had a very productive meeting with the policy committee, and there is a follow-up article in this issue.

I have received notice of a couple of council meetings that have been set. Again, please send a notification to myself and Julie so I can make plans to attend. It is important that we keep our lines of communication open, and the council meetings are a great opportunity for ongoing dialogue.

Washington State has just released a draft of revised process safety management standard (PSM) language

similar to California. You can view it here:

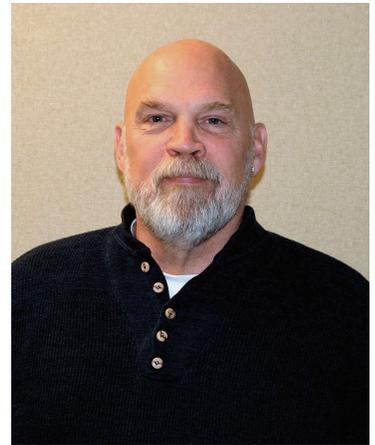
http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/GrantsPartnerships/Committees/PDFs/PSMDraft1918.pdf?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

This is another opportunity to improve the safety of our refineries and help ensure our members go home just as they came to work. The USW has been involved in this process from the beginning,

and we look forward to moving this action forward.

The National Oil Bargaining Policy conference location and date is not set yet, but we are exploring a date sometime in September on the West Coast. As soon as plans are firmed up, we will get the notices out so you can start making your plans to attend.

I want to close on a sad note: My friend and staff representative, Brent Petit, was killed in a car accident just after Christmas. You will find an article on him in this issue. Rest in Peace brother; thanks for all you did for working people throughout Louisiana and our union.



Kim Nibarger

In Solidarity,
Kim Nibarger
NOBP Chair
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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It's important to get this newsletter into the hands of all of our oil members. Please copy *The OilWorker* and hand it out to your fellow members during non-work times (breaks, lunch, before and after work) in non-work areas (breakrooms, lunchrooms, plant gates, entrances into the plant). Also, if you have the home email addresses of your members, please email *The OilWorker* to them. In addition, please post *The OilWorker* to your own and your local's Facebook and web pages and to the union bulletin boards in the plant. Thank you for all your support and help!

Lynne Hancock, *The OilWorker* editor, lhancock@usw.org

USW Mourns Loss of District 13 Staff Representative Brent Petit

USW District 13 Staff Representative Brent Petit was killed Dec. 27, 2017 in a six-vehicle crash on U.S. 90 in St. Charles Parish, La. He was 59.

“Brent was an incredible trade unionist who did everything he could to help others,” said Kim Nibarger, chair of the union’s National Oil Bargaining Program (NOBP). “He was a very nice, kind man; you could always count on him. He will truly be missed.”

Petit began his involvement in the labor movement as an OCAW Local 4-447 (now USW 447) shop steward at Cytec. He then became chair of the Workers Committee, vice president of Local 447, and then president. He also was an executive board member of the Greater New Orleans AFL-CIO, Thibodeaux Central Labor Council, and Louisiana State AFL-CIO. In addition, he was the legislative representative for the USW District 13 council.

After retiring from a 33-year career at Cornerstone Chemical Company in Jefferson Parish, La., he became a District 13 staff representative in April 2016. Members of the Staff Representatives Union (SRU) elected him to be a District 13 steward and member of the SRU executive board.

Petit was a native and resident of Luling, La., and active in the River Parish community. He encouraged local companies to donate to the United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area and to support its programs. He also helped create the River Parish Transit Authority to bring public transportation to River Parish communities, and served as its board chairman.



Brent Petit

Petit is survived by his wife Franziska Lendle Petit; sons Jacques Anton Petit and Rene Alceste Petit; father Stanley Bernard Petit; brother Scott James Petit (Barbara) and many nieces and nephews.

Policy Committee Reaches Out to Oil Locals and Units

With National Oil Bargaining Program (NOBP) talks set to begin next year, the NOBP Policy Committee members and alternates met in Pittsburgh in mid-December to plan mobilization activities in preparation for negotiations.

The NOBP pattern agreement will expire Feb. 1, 2019 at 12:01 a.m., and it covers wages, benefits and working conditions, like health and safety.

“I want members to start thinking seriously about bargaining and what they would like to see in the national agreement and local contracts,” said NOBP Chair Kim Nibarger.

He also wants to see how well the locals and units are implementing the provisions of the current pattern agreement regarding contractors and fatigue; how they are communicating with their members; and which committees or groups they participate in, such as a union-only health and safety committee and Next Gen.

To this end, Nibarger gave each policy committee member and alternate a tablet and told them to contact the locals and units in their region to ask them questions from a survey the union developed.

The survey contains questions such as the number of contractors at each facility; whether or not a plan to hire daily maintenance workers has been developed with management and the number hired; whether or not they are conducting staffing level reviews every six months and getting the needed data from management, and whether or

not they are sending this information to his office.

“This information will help us develop background for the areas we need to concentrate on during bargaining with the industry,” Nibarger said.

New Committee

After the 143-day unfair labor practice strike at selective refineries and petrochemical plants in 2015, many members of the policy committee retired. During the 2016 NOBP conference, delegates elected new committee members and alternates to serve through the next round of negotiations.

Since many had not experienced bargaining as a policy committee member or alternate, they heard at the meeting a history of the NOBP, learned the gains progressively made over time, and received an explanation of why oil bargaining is handled differently from other industries.

Nibarger said the new members and alternates actively participated in the meeting, shared ideas, gave him good feedback and were excited about upcoming bargaining.

They laid out a mobilization schedule, with activities starting in July.

Meanwhile, Nibarger hopes the union’s industry councils will meet before the next NOBP conference—although no date has been set yet, it will be sometime in September—to discuss bargaining policies.

“We geared up the company councils these past few years to make them more active,” he said. “We need them to stick together on bargaining issues.”

Australian Maintenance Workers Fight ExxonMobil Contractor's Slashing of Wages, Benefits, Working Conditions

ExxonMobil's Australian subsidiary—Esso Australia Pty Ltd (Esso)—is supporting its maintenance contractor's move to slash wages up to 30 percent, cut benefits for 200 maintenance contractors, and impose a work schedule that would force offshore workers to spend more time away from home.

In response, the contractors went on strike at Esso's Longford gas plant in June.

The three unions that represent the contractors at the plant and offshore oil and gas platform—Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), Australian Workers' Union (AWU) and Electrical Trades Union of Australia (ETU)—are waging a world-wide campaign and joining allies in pressuring ExxonMobil through exposure of its tax avoidance strategies.

The contractor, UGL, is flying in replacement workers (scabs) into Melbourne, Australia, and busing them to and from the Longford plant, while bypassing the nearby Gippsland community.

Legal Loophole

In February 2017, Esso awarded CIMIC Group company, UGL, a five-year maintenance contract to provide routine maintenance, shutdown and minor modification project services for Esso's onshore oil and gas processing plants, including Longford, its offshore oil and gas producing platforms, and its crude oil, liquefied petroleum gas and gas pipelines.

Loopholes in Australia's Fair Work Act allowed UGL to form a subsidiary company, MTCT Services Pty Ltd. (MTCT) on paper. In May 2017, UGL said if the maintenance workers wanted to keep their jobs they had to sign up with MTCT under an Enterprise Agreement (EA)—a collective bargaining contract—that slashed wages, benefits and degraded working conditions.

But, MTCT did not negotiate the EA with the affected maintenance workers. Instead, it negotiated and received approval from five MTCT employees in Western Australia who did not work at Esso's oil and gas operations.

MTCT said it would employ the workers as casuals without permanent employee entitlements. Depending on a worker's job classification, the company would cut pay up to 30 percent, and it would eliminate annual leave and other benefits such as sick leave and holidays.

“One of the worker's main objections to UGL's take-it-or-leave-it agreement is extending offshore

shifts from weekly to fortnightly,” wrote a Gippsland ETU organizer, in a letter to the *Gippsland Times*.

“Not only does this make offshore work even harder physically, emotionally and psychologically on workers, but their families as well,” he added.

Fighting for Local Jobs

The unions are concerned the loss of local, high-paid maintenance jobs hurts the 1,550 businesses in the Gippsland region where workers spend their money. These businesses, the unions say, are losing \$16 million every year in direct spending.

There also is concern that the community will see an exodus of skilled trades workers and their families, causing reductions in housing real estate values, lower tax revenue, and entrenchment of low-wage jobs and low-employment for future generations.

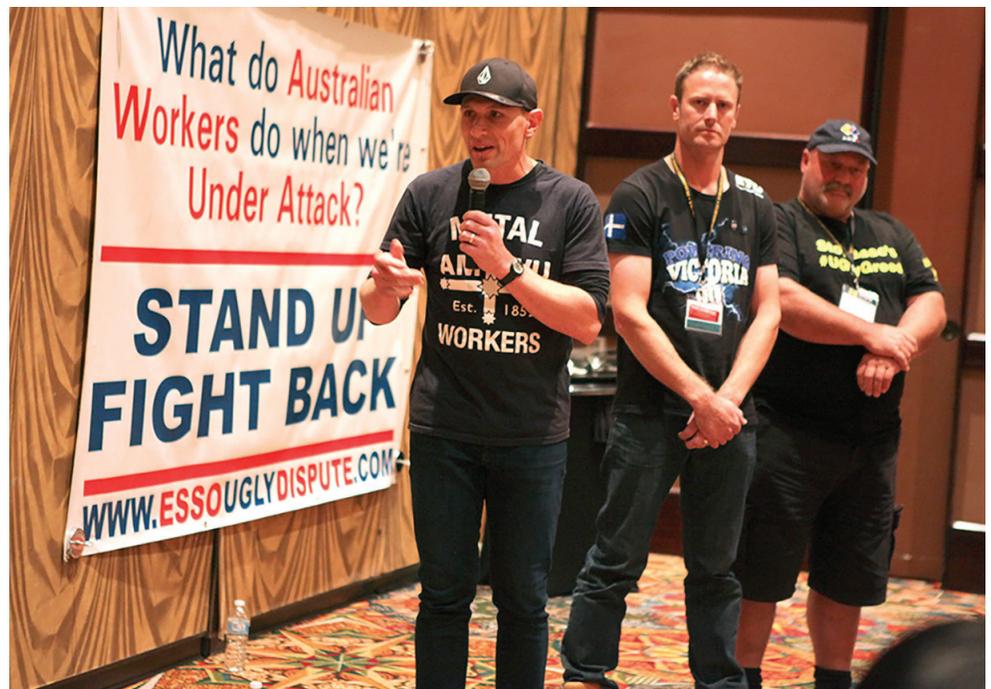
Esso is more concerned about being competitive.

In a letter to the *Gippsland Times*, a production operations manager for Esso Australia wrote: “One way we remain competitive is by periodically re-tendering our contracts. As supply-and-demand dynamics create rises and falls in costs, tendering ensures we receive quality service and materials at competitive market rates.... We will continue to make the changes necessary to enable us to remain a competitor in this domestic gas market.”

Tax Cheater?

The Australian unions joined forces with Tax Justice Network Australia to pressure ExxonMobil. The group issued a report, “Is Exxon Paying A Fair Share Of Tax In Australia?”

(continued on page 5)



(L-R): Troy Corker, Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), Steve Solomon, AMWU, and Dane Coleman, Electrical Trades Union (ETU).

Send Messages of Support to Australian Oil Workers

(continued from page 4)

The group's analysis of Australian Tax Office (ATO) data for the 2014/15 tax year revealed ExxonMobil had nearly \$8.5 billion in total income, but had zero taxable income and paid zero in tax.

Their research showed that it appears ExxonMobil lowers its tax burden by creating shell companies that give loans to Esso Australia.

A company in the Netherlands, ExxonMobil Australia Holdings B.V., owns the Australian operation and has no business other than holding the Australian company's shares.

The Dutch company is 100% owned by ExxonMobil Asia Pacific Holding Limited, which was incorporated in the Bahamas in January 2000. The Tax Justice group counted at least 575 Exxon-related companies registered in the Bahamas, which is a known tax haven.

ExxonMobil denies that it uses the Bahamas to avoid taxes in other countries.

The report also found that it was highly likely that ExxonMobil used transfer pricing on crude and product purchases to shift profits out of Australia.

To read the tax report, go to <https://www.usw.org/union/mission/industries/oil>.

What You Can Do To Help

Send messages of support to: alison.chalk@amwu.org.au, andrew.dettmer@amwu.org.au, anne.donnellan@amwu.org.au, daniel.walton@nat.awu.net.au, debra.bushell@nat.awu.net.au, members@awu.net.au, admin@etuaustralia.org.au and eranga@etuaustralia.org.au.

Sign and share the petition:

<https://www.megaphone.org.au/petitions/exxon-mobil-stop-the-ugly-tactics-to-cut-workers-wages>

Post, like and share the unions' campaign site on Facebook, "Esso/ Longford UGLy dispute", @concernedmaintenanceworker. You can Tweet about @exxonmobil's #UGLyplan.



201 DAYS

FIGHTING EXXONMOBIL AND UGL

ONE DAY LONGER ONE DAY STRONGER