

Building workers in NSW win pay rise

23.12.08

Building workers in NSW have won a good pay rise as well as improved income security in the event they are injured at work or affected by the economic downturn through a new Collective Agreement negotiated by their union the CFMEU.

As part of a number of measures to promote job security, the union has struck a deal where Grocon workers will get an extra \$7 a week for their industry redundancy trust fund.

Currently employers deposit \$68 per week into the Australian Construction Industry Redundancy Trust (ACIRT). From August 2009, that amount will rise to \$75 per week.

If the economic downturn hits harder and a worker is made redundant or terminated they can claim funds from ACIRT.

The three-year pay and conditions deal will also give Grocon's employees in NSW a 5 per cent wage increase each year and improvements to the U-PLUS scheme which provides a top-up to workers' compensation and 24-hour accident insurance especially for building workers.

Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (Construction and General Division) organiser Warren Kelly said: "We are always looking for ways to improve wages and conditions in the building industry.

"Given the nature of the industry and the economic situation, increasing the redundancy payment made and top up insurance gives workers some security and peace of mind."

Workers - via their union - have also kept and improved on other conditions that compensate for the variable and physically demanding nature of the building industry.

The Union Collective Agreement also provides building workers with 13 RDOs per year, six guaranteed Saturdays off each year, meal allowances for overtime and travel allowances for those expected to travel long distances from home.

Thanks to the union, apprentices working for Grocon will receive a travel allowance of \$15 per day increasing to \$16.20 per day in 2010 and \$17.40 a day in 2011.



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Employees at Brighton Australia, a large installer of plasterboard, have also secured improvements to their wages and conditions in a new Collective Agreement signed by the CFMEU and the company.

The Agreement's key objectives are to "provide employees with secure jobs with an opportunity to fully utilise existing and new skills" and "improve the competitiveness, viability and profitability of the company".

The Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union is one of Australia's largest unions with more than 100,000 members and 7,000 Union Collective Agreements and awards.