

RETAIL AND
FAST FOOD
WORKERS
UNION

ACTION

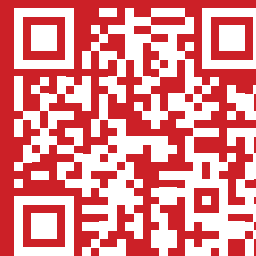


**RETAIL AND
FAST FOOD
WORKERS
UNION**

**JOIN THE MOVEMENT
FOR POSITIVE CHANGE**



JOIN RAFFWU



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ACTION



Carolina Cooksey
President

Over the past nine years, our union has grown nationwide and achieved much in the retail and fast food sector. 2025 has been another momentous year for our union as we continue our fight for fair, safe, and dignified workplace conditions for all retail and fast food workers. In the face of a continued cost-of-living and housing crisis, RAFFWU members have led the way with a range of incredible campaigns that have taken place across the country.

Aesop workers in Victorian retail stores won their campaign to bring L'Oreal to the bargaining table after the vast majority of workers voted in favour of bargaining in April this year. Their success is a testament to the power of grassroots, democratic organising. Aesop workers are bargaining for fair and respectful workplace conditions.

RAFFWU members at Harry Hartog and Berkelouw Books also commenced bargaining in October this year. These workers are exceptionally organised and have built union across many sites in several states. They have now elected ten fantastic delegates. After a consistent and concerted campaign, the majority of Harry Hartog and Berkelouw Book workers voted in favour of bargaining. Members are bargaining for a living wage, meaningful job security, minimum staffing requirements and a range of other great claims.

Reports of workplace violence against retail and fast food workers

are increasing. Woolworths, Coles, and Aldi – companies that already make exorbitant profits – are using bag checks and self-checkout gates to limit theft at the expense of workers' health and safety. All workers deserve to work in a safe workplace. RAFFWU is building a campaign against these unsafe practices and have taken Woolworths to the Fair Work Commission and Aldi to the Federal Court.

Your union is its members, and we are thousands of members strong. While we may have different employers – from large multinational corporations to single-site businesses – our fight for fair conditions and safe workplaces is a shared one. These campaigns are just some of the stories of member action from 2025. The success of these campaigns – and what our union has been able to achieve more broadly – is a testament to what is possible when workers come together and take direct workplace action.



Loukas Kakogiannis
Secretary

RAFFWU was launched nine years ago on the promise of building a fighting union for retail and fast-food workers. We know that better conditions aren't gifted through the kindness of bosses, they are hard fought and won through the collective power of workers exercised through industrial action.

From our humble beginnings in 2016 to now, thousands of retail and fast-food workers have taken action through RAFFWU. We take action on shop floors, in the streets, and on picket lines. Every campaign starts with a conversa-

tion with a co-worker, and from there it grows into petitions, rallies, and strikes. A fighting union means backing in this action every step of the way.

This *Action Magazine* contains some of the stories of the campaigns our members have led in 2025. These stories show the power your union has to deliver real change. Share these stories with your co-workers. Show them what is possible when we stand together in RAFFWU, and dare are them to join you in our fight. Together, we will win.

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Why I've Brought Safety Disputes Against Woolworths

Cameron Standing

Going against your employer is intimidating, I know – especially when it's a large company like Woolworths. Their economic and social power is immense, with their ability to impact workers' livelihoods (casual workers especially) while coasting on the continued patronage of such a large number of Australians – sure, we'll complain endlessly, but we still keep going back.

Being part of the Retail and Fast Food Workers Union has helped and reassured me, their backing has made me more confident, and when it comes to matters of safety I strongly feel that someone needs to stand up and do something to protect workers. Bag checks and Self-Checkout (SCO) gates both go against the principles of worker (and sometimes customer) safety that Woolworths is supposed to uphold, in the name of protecting profits – not even just by lessening theft, but also by avoiding more expensive loss prevention methods that would be safer and more effective.

Bag checks create an uncomfortable and adversarial working environment where customers perceive workers as accusing them of theft, and SCO gates worsen this problem by literally seeking to lock offenders into the SCO space with workers and

customers, with workers then expected to confront them.

I cannot let these kinds of policies go unchecked when I – or we, collectively – have legal rights to do something about it. The Fair Work Commission and the Federal Court exist for a reason, and while their valuable time should not be regarded as automatically owed on a whim, they are there to stand for the rights of all people, not just wealthy corporations and their owners. It takes time, effort, and money, but with the collective

power and resources of a fighting union like RAFFWU it becomes so much more feasible – enough that I felt compelled to raise safety disputes against both of these policies, disputes which other workers in my position can also put their name on. I would rather not do this alone, especially when having others by my side can do so much good.

To anyone reading this who finds joining such a dispute interesting, know that you have the right to do so, and that your help could lead to achieving the goals I went into this with. These include making our workplaces safer, having bag checks and SCO gates removed and spreading both knowledge and a feeling of confidence among retail workers, who will finally know they have people to turn to when it comes to workplace abuses.

“ ***I cannot let these kinds of policies go unchecked when I – or we, collectively – have legal rights to do something about it.***

– Cameron

”



Gates Lock Violent Offenders In

Self Check Out Gates or SCO Gates are physical barriers to exit from a self check out area. In Coles they are called Assisted Check Outs or ACOs. Gates are being installed in hundreds of supermarkets and now Bunnings has announced they will install them too.

These gates **inherently** make the workplace less safe. Bosses want them because they discourage thieves by placing a barrier between them and the exit. While this might reduce the total number of offenders in the workplace, it significantly increases the physical risk to workers and other customers by **locking** in the offender near them. In addition, the gates also lock in innocent customers causing frustration and resentment which can also lead to unsafe confrontations. Worst of all, bosses **blame** workers when they don't hit a button to release the gates when violence ensues. The gates are dumb and dangerous – just like the bosses who install them.

Bag Checks are Notoriously Unsafe

Bag checks have been around for decades and were notoriously used by Coles, Woolworths and other retailers to racially profile and discriminate against customers who were poorer, younger, black or otherwise different. Bag checks are notoriously unsafe. A worker needs to be within arms reach to conduct a bag check and the whole purpose is to 'catch a thief'. Retailers see them as a discouragement to offending because the idea is that a thief won't steal if their bag will be checked. Of course, that fails when the bag of a thief is checked and an instant confrontation occurs at close proximity. Innocent customers feel targeted and violated too – risking conflict and confrontation.

RAFFWU successfully lobbied Coles to stop bag checks but Aldi, Woolworths and others have maintained them. As an unsafe system of work it beggars belief the safety regulators haven't intervened to stop them. Now some employers like Woolworths and Aldi argue workers don't have to do them when they feel unsafe – but demand answers from any worker who says they don't feel safe. These ruses are a blame-shifting exercise because bosses know workers are reliant on them for shifts and for jobs.





Why the Cops Aren't on Our Side

At nearly every turning point in labour movement history, one force has consistently stood in the way of workers struggling for their rights – the police.

Whether it be standing shoulder to shoulder with private security forces to chase Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) members off the docks in the 1998 Patrick Corporation dispute or punching Hannah Thomas in the eye this year for protesting against a weapons manufacturer, the police are always on the side of big business against the rights of working people.

Retail and fast-food workers who face increasing customer aggression and abuse are often left with no choice other than to call the police when their safety is under immediate threat. More so now than ever before, this is a direct result of bosses' policies that place workers directly in harms way in order to protect their profits. Today, we see retailers expand their surveillance technologies to crack down on theft while price-gouging every last cent they can squeeze from working people.

When bosses call for "law and order", they mean order for the rich and law against the poor. RAFFWU members went on strike during the Superstrike at Coles Banksia Grove. Those members regularly faced aggression and violence at work and would call police in the event of serious escalations. Like so many of our workplaces, the cops rarely show up when a supermarket worker's safety was on the line.

Members peacefully rallied outside their shopping centre on strike day, they were greeted by a group of police. When retail workers' physical safety was at risk, they were nowhere to be seen. But when a boss picks up the phone because his profits needed protecting, the cops were on the scene in a heartbeat. They issued move on orders to a group of women peacefully exercising their human right to strike for a living wage, secure jobs, and ironically – safer workplaces.

A government-funded police force didn't always exist. In Britain, it wasn't until the 1820s that the government introduced state funded police to address masses of newly industrialised workers protesting against a lack of voting rights, rising unemployment levels, and increases to the cost of living.

In Australia, police pose a disproportionate risk to First Nations people. First Nations people make up nearly 20 percent of deaths in police or prison custody since 1991, despite making up less than 4 percent of the Australian population.

On 27 May 2025, Kumanjayi White, a disabled 24-year-old Warlpiri man was killed by a plain-clothed and off-duty police officer on the floor of a Coles supermarket in Alice Springs. No criminal charges have been laid against those involved. His murder prompted thousands to march on the State Parliament of Victoria demanding justice. A group of RAFFWU members were among those in attendance.

When the police kill innocent people, police 'unions' support them. Police unions are not real trade unions because the police are not real workers – they are an armed group created by the government to defend the interests of capital. Police unions campaign for cops to get more powerful weapons, for clauses in their EBAs that protect them against being fired for misconduct, and for the law to expand their powers. Despite this, the ACTU (Australian Council of Trade Unions) supports police associations being involved in the trade union movement.

As retail and fast-food workers, we know that we can't rely on the police or our bosses to make our workplace safe. **RAFFWU's strength as a union is built on our solidarity. We know that true safety at work will only be won through the action of our members campaigning against chronic understaffing, fighting for secure jobs, and demanding unsafe systems of work be abolished.**

Woolworths 2024 Agreement Judicial Review

A Fight Worth Having



In 2024 we ran a groundbreaking campaign to stop another sellout deal at Woolworths. We achieved a massive no vote, the largest in Australian history, with Woolworths admitting more than 35,000 workers voted against the deal. We exposed SDA and Woolworths buried numerous attacks on workers in hundreds of pages of guff.

With evidence of nine RAFFWU witnesses we took the case to the Fair Work Commission but the deal was rubber stamped. This was despite identifying serious issues on vote manipulation, misrepresentations, misleading conduct and at least 14,000 ineligible votes!

We then went to the Federal Court. In August 2025 the Federal Court dismissed our application finding the Woolworths 2024 Agreement had been validly approved.

Despite this disappointing outcome, we did the right thing in fighting for every worker at Woolworths. Every member should have living wages, safer workplaces and secure jobs. The sellout 2024 deal entrenched worse conditions. We put our members first and took the case on.

We know that Woolworths and their SDA was shaken by the massive no vote which sends a clear message for the next bargaining round.

Landmark Outcome

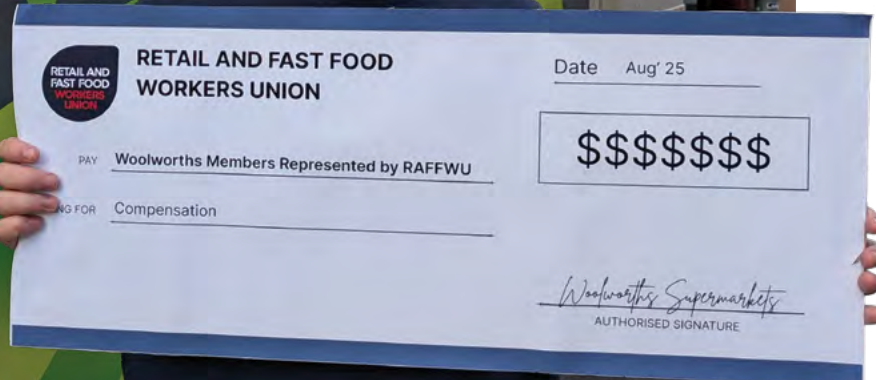
in RAFFWU Lawsuit Against Woolworths Regarding Overnight Work Changes in 2021

On 21 April 2021, at the height of the pandemic, Woolworths notified around 1,500 overnight workers in the dead of night that they would radically change their hours from overnight to day or evening work. Many workers disputed the changes and in July 2021 a large group of RAFFWU members refused to change rosters and kept turning up to their old shifts. In response, Woolworths sent them home and threatened not to pay them.

On 4 December 2023, RAFFWU commenced litigation against Woolworths alleging the true reasons for changing shifts were unlawful and that threats of no pay were unlawful coercion.

In July 2025 RAFFWU reached a satisfactory conclusion to the case with Woolworths. That outcome includes that Woolworths has agreed to pay compensation to impacted team members who were represented by RAFFWU.

Read the RAFFWU & Woolworths Agreed Communication





Bargaining at IGA, Foodworks and Go Grocer Stores

Ben Milne

In early May I walked into the break room at my Foodworks store to see a proposed SDA enterprise agreement covering the Reddrop Group – a chain of supermarkets. We had just over a week to give our 'feedback' before a vote was to commence. This came as a surprise not just to me, but to all my co-workers who had no idea that we had been bargaining at all.

As a RAFFWU member for the previous couple of years, I immediately sent an email to RAFFWU to ask if the deal was any good, and if we could force the company to delay bargaining so that myself and other RAFFWU members in the wider Reddrop Group could join bargaining.

The answer to the first question was (unsurprisingly) that the proposed deal was very sub-par. It only proposed a wage rise of 0.15% above minimum wage, which amounted to 6c/hour - not even enough to cover membership dues, let alone put a dent in the real wage decreases we've experienced over the past several years. The kicker was that the deal actually undermined the rights of part-time workers around their

rostering. It was important that we took a stand against this deal and fought for a better one.

The answer to the second question was that we would need to take Reddrop to the Fair Work Commission, which RAFFWU committed to do.

During the hearing at the Fair Work Commission, RAFFWU argued that the company had not acted in good faith to let us workers know that we were in bargaining and could appoint a bargaining representative. Reddrop's defence? They put up a notice about bargaining in mid-2022. That's right, you could've worked at a Reddrop store for 3 years and never been told that we had been 'bargaining' for the entire time you'd worked there. It later turned out that the notice they had posted didn't even meet the minimum standards for such a notice.

Thanks to RAFFWU representing us, the Fair Work Commission ruled that Reddrop had to come back to the bargaining table, opening the door for members of RAFFWU to have our voices heard.

Audrey Hatfield

Like most of my co-workers, I had no idea that we were entitled to appoint our own bargaining representative before Ben got RAFFWU involved. I was ready to say "yes" to the proposed agreement without investigating further. RAFFWU enabled us to open that discussion, and I had many talks with coworkers about working rights that were eye-opening. I learned more about our rights in the workplace and the ways our workplace could improve. We worked with Michael to create a list of 33 claims to bring to the bargaining meeting, including a wage increase, better superannuation, minimum shift lengths, the right to a healthy and safe work environment, and training programs for our roles. While the bargaining is still ongoing, attending the meetings granted me an interesting look into the bargaining process and the management system for our workplace that I would have never known about otherwise. Bargaining is ongoing, and there's much left to do.

I am so grateful for this experience that allowed me to open this conversation in my workplace and gain a better understanding of it.



Sadie Shook Aldi to its Core

Despite having operated in Australia since 2001, nothing scared the international behemoth as much as a determined young woman.

Sadie could see that Aldi was putting her and thousands of colleagues in harms way to make a buck. Sadie wasn't having it. Sadie didn't lose her temper or walk out – she calmly went about getting elected as Health and Safety Representative, getting trained and holding Aldi to account.

Being elected as the Health and Safety Representative gave Sadie special rights to be consulted, to investigate concerns, to conduct audits and to hold Aldi responsible for deliberately putting thousands of workers at risk.

Stopping unsafe work has always carried a cost. When we stopped children being put in mines or on looms, bosses had to pay more. When we slow down for forklifts, or to move pallets, bosses pay more. Safety matting at our registers has a cost. High

visibility vests have a cost. Wearing gloves to clean has a cost.

Our bosses would not hesitate in eliminating **every** safety standard to make a buck. We know this, because they do. The garments they source from places like Bangladesh are made in horrendous conditions – to save a buck. Every day bosses tell workers they aren't scanning fast enough, their carton rates are up or there's more cleaning to do. They say not to stop an offender then lock them in our registers and demand we check their bags.

When we get hurt, they don't tell us about Workcover. We get sent to company doctors. We have a few free physio sessions then get thrown aside. They break our bodies, and our minds, all for a buck.

Sadie said no. Sadie wasn't having it. Sadie inspires us all to stand up and fight back. So when Aldi sacked Sadie for putting safety first there wasn't a choice for RAFFWU. We organise, we campaign, we litigate. We **#FightBackWithRAFFWU**.





Hi, I'm Sadie.

I'm 20 years old, and I used to work for Aldi, as the elected health and safety representative (HSR).

In January 2024 I was violently attacked at work by a customer, due to Aldi's bag check policy. She hurled a milk carton at my face and pushed me to the ground, screaming death threats at me. A couple weeks later, my coworker was bashed so brutally they had to get stitches.

Another was strangled by a customer, to the point they had bruises around their neck. We've had knives pulled on us. We are threatened with violence and murder. There was this impending sense of doom everytime I would clock in, because I knew at some point of my shift, I was going to be abused.

So in May this year, after I was elected as HSR, I undertook a stress survey with my coworkers, and the results were alarming. 78.5% reported they were suffering from fatigue, over 80% experienced conflict at work, and 40% reporting customer aggression and violence as severe. But instead of addressing their workers' pleas for safety, Aldi's response to the survey results was to fire me for 'serious misconduct'.

But unfortunately for Aldi, firing me can't silence me. My struggle for justice is not over yet. RAFFWU and I have taken Aldi to court, and we have led a rally outside the Swanston St store in protest of my dismissal. My story has been shared on TV, radio shows, newspapers, social media and websites. I'm also very excited to report that RAFFWU membership within Aldi has been increasing too.

So to conclude, I remind you all that this fight is not just about me, it's about all of us. It's for everyone of you, who has been yelled at, discriminated against, threatened, harassed, attacked, or abused at work. Too often we are reduced to numbers by our employers, but we are human beings, deserving of safety and respect. You are not alone. I fight this fight for you.

Solidarity forever,

Sadie



**BREAKING
NEWS**

RAFFWU Sues Endeavour Group Over Paying Stolen Wages to SDA

Too many bosses steal worker wages as SDA fees long after workers have quit SDA or directed the employer to stop payroll deductions. Woolworths is one of the worst and their spin-off, Endeavour Group, is now before the courts for its conduct.

Endeavour Group operates BWS and Dan Murphy's stores and in early 2025, RAFFWU member Zac demanded the employer stop fee deductions from their wages when they quit SDA. BWS refused – insisting SDA would stop the deductions. Zac tried calling and writing to BWS before turning to RAFFWU. For months his wages were stolen by BWS and paid to SDA.

This conduct is based in a sick history of bosses helping SDA trick, coerce, mislead and deceive workers into paying too much of their wages into the boss' SDA. The law is explicit – any worker can stop deductions by writing to their employer. Despite this, BWS refused and now RAFFWU is suing them for misrepresenting worker rights and Zac is suing for the wage theft.

Have your wages been stolen by your boss after you wrote to them to stop deductions?

▶▶▶ Let us know at:
contact@raffwu.org.au

Want to stop deductions to SDA?

▶▶▶ Write to your payroll, HR or store manager and keep a copy of your email.

Your email should state:

I hereby rescind any and all authority for SDA membership fees to be deducted from my pay. This serves as advice under s.324 of the Fair Work Act.

New RAFFWU Tees are Now Available!



The new tees display the awesome artwork featured on the front cover of this edition of Action by RAFFWU supporter and artist Sam Wallman.

The tee is perfect for RAFFWU members and supporters who want to wear their RAFFWU pride at rallies and events, or even while doing your weekly shop.

All tees are black. The style is unisex with a straight cut and sizes are generous.

Tees are Australian Made and Ethical Clothing Australia certified, and screen printed in Australia.



Tees can be purchased through our website. Scan here to check out more items ▶▶▶



Bargaining at BWS and Dan Murphy's

Since our agreement expired in 2022, Endeavour Group had been seriously dragging their heels on starting negotiations for a new agreement.

After getting together with RAFFWU members across the country, I found out that the company had some workers on the hospitality award, getting lower pay and worse conditions for the same work that I was doing simply because their store was near a pub owned by the same company!

Our first round of negotiations, Endeavour Group accepted our baseline claim for same work, same pay and conditions – a massive win for the union and Dan Murphy's workers.

BWS and Dan Murphy's plumbed new depths of anti-worker arrogance in its 2025 campaign to foist a sellout SDA deal on workers. Keeping the agreement locked behind an intranet workers couldn't easily access, and materials devoid of explanation on detriments, it was a textbook case of the bosses and their SDA treating workers as mushrooms. Fed crap in the dark, the employer claimed its deal was validly made.

RAFFWU brought a strong case to the Fair Work Commission of how the deal failed the core principles of genuine agreement. For example:

This year, we joined forces with BWS comrades to negotiate a joint EBA.

We developed a great log of claims that reflect what workers selling controlled substances, dealing with increasing customer abuse, high rates of manual handling injuries and BWS comrades, who often work alone, wanted to see in an agreement.

For anyone who has an agreement that is about to expire, get involved in the bargaining process. RAFFWU is a truly democratic union, and your ideas form the negotiating position. RAFFWU also empowers workers to be at the bargaining table, instead of making dodgy deals behind closed doors. You know that HR's policy isn't followed

by store managers (Like that cold work allowance that nobody seems to get paid!?) so who better to tell HR than a real worker!

Endeavour Group rejected almost all our claims and made a dodgy backroom deal with the SDA. They then stripped our laundering allowance while telling us how thankful we should be for our legally mandated minimum wage rise! Workers responded with a four-fold increase in the no vote compared to the last agreements.

A strong message to Endeavour Group that liquor store workers are fed up with backroom deals that cut our rights. RAFFWU took our case to the Fair Work Commission to challenge the unfair agreement.

- ✘ **No workers were told (at all) that part-time rights under the Award to set days of work were obliterated;**
- ✘ **No workers had it explained to them how much less they would be paid because SDA deleted higher duties rights; and**
- ✘ **No workers were told their right to arbitration of disputes was secretly removed (the bosses said SDA demanded this worker right be cut).**

The bosses scurried for answers increasing the in-charge allowance, undertaking to restore the arbitration rights for workers and undertaking to not change the days of work for part-time workers without agreement.

These outcomes were a direct result of our case but we know the wages and conditions we deserve will only come from organising and taking action next time.



Aēsop Workers Take the Next Step: From Organising to Bargaining

Last year, Aēsop retail workers came together to form a union and demand fair treatment. What began as small, quiet conversations in the back rooms of stores has now grown into a confident, collective campaign for change. In 2025, our movement entered a new chapter, one that took us all the way to the Fair Work Commission, united by the belief that the people who bring Aēsop to life every day deserve a real voice in shaping its future.

After months of patient organising, meetings, and unanswered calls for change, Aēsop retail workers supported by RAFFWU lodged a petition with the Fair Work Commission to compel Aēsop to bargain. It was a historic step for us. For too long, upper management had ignored our formal request to bargain, hoping that the issue would fade quietly away. Instead, we doubled down. Workers provided signed statements and proof of majority

support across stores, coming together to demonstrate that this was not the passion of a few, but the will of an entire workforce.

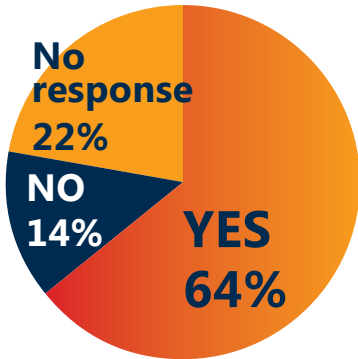
The Fair Work Commission then opened a ballot to all Aēsop retail workers to decide whether we would officially bargain for an Enterprise Agreement. At every step forward there were hundreds of conversations between colleagues in stockrooms, on lunch breaks, and after closing shifts.

Delegates and active members visited stores across Victoria, checking in with teams, listening to experiences, and answering questions. These visits helped break down the sense of isolation that so many retail workers had felt. Whether in South Yarra or Fitzroy, in North Melbourne or Emporium, we shared the same struggles: understaffing, unrealistic expectations, and a culture that valued KPIs over wellbeing. We realised that what we were experiencing was not personal misfortune, it was structural. Talking with one another reignited a sense of connection. It reminded us that change begins when we speak honestly and when we speak together.

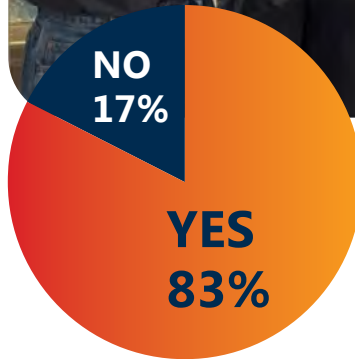


Majority Support Determination

Do you want to bargain for an Enterprise Agreement covering your employer, Aēsop Retail Pty Ltd., and all employees of the employer who are employed to perform retail work in Aēsop stores located within the state of Victoria?



% of Total (199)



% of Response Rate (155)



**"In union,
there is strength."**

– Aēsop

The result was clear: a majority of Aēsop workers voted yes, with a resounding 64% of Victorian retail workers voting in favour of an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement. For the first time, Aēsop workers had won formal recognition of our right to negotiate. Many of us had never been part of a union ballot before, but we quickly saw how powerful collective action can be when everyone participates. That victory was about more than numbers, it was a declaration that we are ready to stand together, to shape our workplaces with care and fairness.

Once the petition was accepted, it marked a turning point, an acknowledgment that Aēsop workers have the right to bargain collectively. So we began building our claims from the ground up. Through meetings, surveys, and store visits, workers shared what matters most: safe staffing levels, fair and transparent rostering, proper rest breaks, and pay that reflects the skill and knowledge expected of us. We also developed claims around the values that Aēsop proudly promotes, such

as social responsibility, care, and respect. We want to see these values genuinely reflected in how the company treats its staff, not just in how it markets its products.

The first meetings brought together Aēsop and L'Oréal management, RAFFWU representatives, and our own elected delegates. These early sessions were a learning experience, but also a moment of empowerment. We were no longer speaking hypothetically about fairness; we were at the table, representing our colleagues, putting our concerns directly to the leaders shaping the future of Aēsop.

Throughout this process, a new challenge emerged in the SDA. Despite having no presence during the months of organising, the SDA inserted itself into the bargaining process. Their arrival raised serious concerns about genuine representation and integrity. A union without members at the table cannot claim to speak for other workers. RAFFWU remains the only union representing the genuine voices of Aēsop's retail

staff, those who built this campaign from scratch and who continue to show up in meetings, rallies, and bargaining sessions. We remain firm that our campaign will be led by the people who actually work behind the counter.

As we move deeper into bargaining, our vision is clear. We want an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement that enshrines fairness, dignity, and security for every Aēsop retail worker. We want wages that reflect the high expectations of our roles, as well as job security, fair processes, safety, and respect. And we want Aēsop, a brand that proudly claims to value people and the planet, to remember that those values must extend beyond profit alone.

Our campaign has already inspired conversations across Australia, as other Aēsop stores and retail workers take notice. We are proud of how far we have come, and we know the work ahead will demand the same solidarity, courage, and creativity that got us here.

Our story is not finished, but it is stronger than ever.



Organising at Harry Hartog and Berkelouw Books

When we first started organising at Harry Hartog Berkelouw Books, we quickly realised for the first time that our conditions were defined by a 'zombie' enterprise agreement from 2012, which was originally intended to apply 6 workers at a hybrid café/bookstore. Instead, it was now being applied to 180 workers across 17 stores in New South Wales, Queensland Canberra and Adelaide.

Our agreement required that we work on public holidays for no additional pay, slashed minimum Award penalty rates, and saw almost all workers engaged as part-timers but only guaranteed 4 hours of work each week.

The thing about workplaces where employees aren't treated well is that they're so very tiring to work in. When you can tell that your voice isn't heard, that your opinion is discounted, and that your only "value" is as a cog in the machine, it becomes impossible to stop yourself from thinking change is impossible. It's easier for bosses if their workers believe that, which has certainly been our experience at Berkelouw Books/ Harry Hartog.

One of the early challenges we faced organising at HHBB was connecting with other workers across the company's vast network

of stores. With stores across multiple states and cities, we've been isolated from most of our co-workers. It's infrequent that we work across stores, and even within each store many workers only see a handful of their colleagues each week.

To overcome this, we knew we had to lean on every connection we had. We held union meetings where we brainstormed every person that we knew across the business. Maybe we had someone on Instagram, or an old number saved in our phone. Sometimes it was as simple as walking into a store where we knew nobody and just having conversations with co-workers we had never encountered before.

Sometimes it's difficult to find the time to have these conversations,



so we also produced some awesome flyers and zines with information about our campaign to share with our co-workers.

We knew that we had to develop a plan for changing the business. Through our conversations with RAFFWU organisers, we determined that this would be best achieved not by knocking off our zombie agreement in favour of the superior General Retail Industry Award, but by replacing it with a new enterprise agreement negotiated by us.

One of the most rewarding parts of the early stages of our campaign in 2024 was talking to each other about the ways we wanted to improve our workplaces. In many meetings the highlight

BUT WE CAN CHANGE THINGS!
IN ORDER TO DO SO, WE HAVE TO
SHOW THAT A MAJORITY OF US
WANT TO BARGAIN.



was hearing how workers at stores all across Australia were experiencing the same challenges and knowing that we weren't facing those problems alone.

We developed a log of claims, which is essentially a list of everything that you want changed about your relationship with your boss. It included 12-hour minimum part-time contracts, increased penalty rates, workplace safety provisions, additional leave rights, the lot. We came up with 62 claims in total.

But we knew that we weren't going to actually achieve any of these claims without power. Power meant organising our co-workers into RAFFWU.

Our aim was to recruit 50% of our co-workers into RAFFWU. This meant having hundreds of conversations with our co-workers to build our union density, trying to inspire in them the vision that we had articulated through our log of claims.

It wasn't easy! For months we got tantalisingly close to our goal before a massive turnover of staff would mean it was much further away. In mid-2025 we decided to change tack. We decided to pivot to a new plan whereby we would collect petitions from our supportive co-workers who were yet to join RAFFWU and then use the petition alongside our membership numbers to demonstrate to our boss that the majority

of workers wanted to bargain. RAFFWU finessed the wording on the petition, and we began to reach out to non-members asking if they would be willing to sign it.

This started a whole new round of conversations. We organised lots of smaller, in-person meetings for workers in stores outside of Sydney where we could pitch our new strategy, explain the benefits they would get from a new Enterprise Agreement, and give them the opportunity to ask questions and sign the petition.

Now that we had a game plan that relied on a smaller barrier to entry – signing a petition, rather than joining the union – those final few steps looked less overwhelming. It was easier for members to broach the topic of a petition and that in itself was energising. What surprised us even more was that we held the meetings to discuss the petition, many non-members actually joined the union instead of just signing the petition.

**WE'RE
STRONGER
TOGETHER!**

JOINING THE UNION IS
PROTECTED.

IT IS UNLAWFUL FOR ADVERSE
ACTION TO BE TAKEN AGAINST
A WORKER ON THE BASIS OF
THEIR UNION MEMBERSHIP.





So many people joined once we were able to say, definitively, “Yes, *this is happening*”. As membership numbers grew in stores that had struggled to recruit in the past, we even had more members stepping up to be delegates in their workplaces as well.

The work that members had put into all of their conversations over the previous year was what prepared workers across the company to take those next steps. We also wouldn’t have gotten to this point if we hadn’t built a culture of compassion and solidarity within the workforce, both for members and non-members. It meant that when people were getting tired, they were able to reach out to the wider union membership and RAFFWU for support. We made sure to

talk to each other when things were hard so that if one person needed to step back, someone else could step up to help out.

Before too long we had an overwhelming majority of support and wrote to our employer to initiate bargaining. Our numbers meant that they had no other option than to accede to our demand.

They wrote an email out to all staff announcing that they were initiating bargaining. It didn’t mention RAFFWU at all, or our petition.

Now we’ve been able to build our campaign to have over 100 members, 10 delegates, and started to meet with

us to bargain. At the time of writing, we have just secured a Protected Action Ballot Order which means that soon we will be voting on whether to have access to industrial action in December.

There's still a lot for us to do, but we've proven that we're more than capable of the hard work needed to improve conditions for everyone.





Organising at Goodbyes

Goodbyes has six secondhand resale stores across Australia, including three stores in Naarm/Melbourne. The business sells clothing, shoes and accessories on consignment for members of the public. Workers are required to select or reject items brought in by members of the public, as well as operate the busy retail stores.

Earlier this year, Goodbyes notified workers that they were changing the way they roster shifts, with less workers to be rostered on each day. Casual staff were told that there would be fewer shifts available for them in future. Many of these casual comrades have worked for the company for five years or longer.

While Goodbyes seeks to expand and open stores in new locations, staff at the existing stores have been dealing with understaffing and a high turnover of management. At the same time, staff have been facing an increase in customer abuse which left us feeling unsafe and unsupported at work.

For the first time ever, we decided that enough was enough, and that we needed to unionise.

Workers from all three Naarm locations presented the company with a petition demanding that security guards be deployed at all locations, that all stores be deep cleaned to remove health hazards like dust and that the company take the physical and mental health

of their workers into account by adequately staffing their stores.

Goodbyes haven't yet agreed to all the demands of our petition. But we have had some wins. The company has brought in specialist cleaners to do a deep clean of all of the stores and hired technicians to clean and fix our air conditioning units. The company has also agreed to a 'trial' of store safety guards.

Much more needs to be done to fully address our concerns. With so many new workers now united in RAFFWU, we are now planning the next steps in our campaign.

Our campaign is ongoing.

We know that together, in RAFFWU, we will win.



RAFFWU Members Celebrate Labour Day in Queensland

Each year on the first Monday of May, Queensland has a public holiday to mark Labour Day. For over 100 years Unions have marked the day with a rally through the streets of Brisbane. RAFFWU Members were proud, excited and out in loud force to celebrate and recognize the achievements of the labour movement, showing solidarity and highlighting ongoing issues.

RAFFWU Member Emily, attended her first ever Labour Day Rally, was interviewed on the day.

Why is Labour Day important for you?

My workplace (Drakes Supermarkets) is closed for the day. Even though I am casual it is good to have a day off and walk the streets with other workers. Labour Day is important to me because it is a day where workers can come together and have valuable conversations which are essential towards meaningful change. It is also nice to be around like-minded people.

As a young worker at your first ever Labour Day Rally did you feel welcomed and safe?

Definitely! I was welcomed by everyone there kindly despite only meeting me for the first time. I had a lot of fun walking beside other RAFFWU members and talking to them, and the lunch we had afterwards was great too. I also felt welcomed by the other unions as well who were marching with us, the positive relationship RAFFWU has grown with other unions was very apparent on that day.

What was the highlight of the day for you?

The highlight of my day was when RAFFWU stood to the side and cheered to all the other unions walking past. It was nice to see the wonderful community that has grown between all the unions. We cheered for all the people walking past and they cheered back. It was also fun to be able to hold the banner up and walk at the front of the union.

Is it something that you would attend in the future?

Yes, every year!



Why we Fight in Retail and Fast Food



Allister S.

I was talking to a comrade at a bar a few weeks ago — they told me that they had just found out that they'd lost their job as the sole employee at a bar. After commiserating, I asked, **"Why don't you go get a job at a bar with other workers and have a crack at union organising?"**. Their response was, **"Why would I bother organising in hospitality? It's not worth the energy"**. Having this response from someone who often attends rallies and showed up to 'Block the Dock' surprised me.

"It's not worth the energy."

The fight to unionise in retail is hard. If it were easy, it'd already be done. It often feels like a hopeless, uphill battle full of setbacks and disappointment. When you're not fighting management, you're fighting the SDA or statutory regulators to take you seriously. When you're talking to coworkers about their issues, or even if you get a union sign-up, the threat of our high turnover rates is always looming over our heads. They could be gone in the next few months- then you're back at square one. In this industry, the sentiment of *"that's just the way it is"* is palpable; it's absolutely everywhere. But the fight is worth it as much as it is hard.

Retail and Fast Food workers are often placed on a low rung in society, and that's exactly why we should fight with all we've got. Petbarn, where I work, is probably one of the more wholesome retail gigs, as far as jobs go. We see dogs every day, and most of the product knowledge is interesting. Once, I helped take a photo of a pug in a pumpkin costume for Halloween (delightful!). Daily,

however, we're also handling 15kg+ bags of seed and kibble, dealing with unpredictable dogs, and expected to learn and retain significant knowledge on all animals, nutrition, and wellbeing. Some of us have come from vet clinics and are trained as vet nurses. We have to clean up everything. And all for minimum Award wages.

When our store got Health and Safety reps elected, we were the first to get them in the company, Australia-wide. Most of us had reported back-strain and we were getting hurt. When our HSRs brought our concerns about manual handling to management, we received two ergonomic, safety trolleys that remain at a comfortable height for trial in our store. Since these trolleys were brought in 1.5 years ago (although they're not perfect), we've barely had one incident relating to our backs or shoulders.

When we had a significant rat problem in 2024, we asked what was going to be done about it. Rodents pose a health risk to staff and customers, and fundamentally, we deserve a safe workplace. Because we fought,

the rat problem was solved within a few months by introducing a temporary storage container to house our most targeted merchandise and allocating more hours for cleaning.

From seeing how slow management was to act prior to unionising to how they act now when we have an issue is night and day. We'd been asking for health and safety issues to be fixed for years before we got HSRs. We also know that other stores around us are facing very similar problems, and they're not getting their issues solved. WE solved these issues by uniting and demanding that we deserve a safe workplace, highlighting the common union saying, *"If we don't fight, we lose."* However, mine is one store out of hundreds across the country. We know that this potential is in every one of us.

We do all the work. We all deserve respect, and (again) we all deserve a safe workplace. That is why we fight. It's a long, hard road ahead of us, but it's worth the energy and always will be.



KFC Lismore are Getting Organised

Members at KFC are organising, and for the workers at KFC Lismore a safer workplace is the target of a mammoth organising effort. Fast Food giants employ young workers in massive numbers and exploit their labour in tiring and thankless work, paying them less while expecting equal work under rotten conditions.

For these workers, heat has been an ongoing issue. expected to perform under intense temperatures with an air conditioning system that barely touches the stifling heats of the Australian sun, let alone inside an industrial kitchen.

Members are working hard to recruit their co-workers and are thoroughly documenting safety concerns to management.

RAFFWU's free under-18 membership has been instrumental in helping these young, underpaid workers access support and representation with these issues. KFC Lismore now have 3 outstanding delegates leading their action.

RAFFWU Secures Free Period Care Products for Jaycar Workers

Menstruation is a natural and basic fact of life. This begs the question of why so many workplaces not supply period care products for their workers?

We take it for granted that toilets should be stocked with toilet paper and hand soap – why should the same logic not apply to tampons and pads? These products are not luxuries, they are necessities.

RAFFWU securing a clause in the new Jaycar enterprise agreement which guarantees that period care products will be supplied to workers free of charge is immensely important. By doing so, RAFFWU Jaycar members have helped to further destigmatise menstruation and ensure dignity for all those that menstruate.

RAFFWU Jaycar members have paved the way for other RAFFWU members to demand free period care products be provided in every retail and fast-food workplace. **Every workplace can and should supply these basic necessities to their workers.**

We're Bloody Essential!

Injured at work?

Shine Lawyers & Sciaccas share everything you need to know about workers' compensation.



What's workers' compensation?

All employers are required to have workers' compensation insurance for their employees. As a worker, whether full-time, part-time, casual, or self-employed, you are eligible to access workers' compensation benefits if you experience a work-related injury or illness.

Workers' compensation is like a safety net. If you're hurt on the job, this insurance helps cover medical bills and lost wages. Employers work to keep you safe, but if accidents happen, workers' compensation is there to help.



Workplace injury? Here's what you should do:

- 1 Document and report your injury or illness to your employer:** It's important to immediately inform your employer about your work-related injury and keep any relevant information and documentation relevant to this conversation.
- 2 Make a doctor's appointment:** Preferably with your personal doctor – and explain what has happened. It's important the doctor documents everything thoroughly and accurately and you ask them for a 'Certificate of capacity.'
- 3 We'll help you submit your claim and inform your employer:** You may need to complete and submit a compensation claim form and certificate of capacity with your employer. Shine Lawyers can assist you with that process.
- 4 We'll build your claim and keep you informed:** We will work with you to gather all the documentation and medical evidence required to support your claim. You focus on your recovery and rehabilitation, and we'll take care of the rest whilst always keeping you in the loop. Once our investigations are complete, we will advise you of the best way forward.
- 5 Resolve your case:** If your claim is successful, you will receive the compensation you are entitled to, so you can focus on your future.

*You may be eligible for an insurance claim through your superannuation.



What can you claim for?

Compensation depends on your specific circumstances, but may include:

- Loss of income until retirement age
- Medical and rehabilitation expenses
- Travelling expenses
- Permanent impairment compensation
- Return to work services



How long will it take?

Strict time limits apply for starting your claim. The time frame to resolve your workers' compensation claim depends on:

- How complicated your circumstances are
- How serious your injuries are
- The treatment you need to restore your health



Contact your local lawyer

Shine Lawyers and Sciaccas provide workers' compensation legal services for all RAFFWU members. No matter where you're located, we're here to help. Contact us for a free, no obligation chat.



Sarah Hunt
NSW Workers' Compensation | Shine Lawyers
1800 560 759



Arsan Mutluel
VIC Workers' Compensation | Shine Lawyers
1800 560 759



Jason McAulay
QLD Workers' Compensation | Sciaccas Lawyers
1800 658 525



McDonald's Bargaining & the SDA

What's Really Going On?

In 2025, the Fair Work Commission issued a supported bargaining authorisation against 17 McDonald's franchisees in South Australia. McDonald's has appealed the decision and SDA has applied for similar authorisations across Australia. We know that SDA deals have notoriously cut conditions below the minimum Award levels so what's really going on?

Firstly, a little history. McDonald's is notoriously anti-union. In fact, the only 'union' they have ever worked with in the world was the SDA. That's because about 25 years ago the SDA helped McDonald's cut a sellout deal which cut penalty rates. In return, McDonald's helped SDA pressure and trick kids into 'joining' and processed SDA fees by payroll deductions. Over the next 20 years, SDA made a series of deals with McDonald's which cut penalty rates and other rights by over \$150 million a year. SDA also helped McDonald's abolish rest breaks.

Then came RAFFWU. We returned rest breaks, won court cases and terminated the rotten old SDA deal returning over \$150 million a year in stolen penalty rates. Without the deal, Maccas had no use for their SDA. The response was swift – two weeks after the deal was gone in February 2020 they stopped

recruiting children to SDA and stopped allowing payroll deductions. SDA fell to its begging knees and in April and May 2020 tried to cut Award conditions for all Fast Food workers in a secret COVID pact with McDonald's. RAFFWU exposed and stopped that attack. We then won our rest breaks cases and launched our class action.

In the meantime, SDA membership has plummeted and workers are wising up to their game. That's the context. SDA is desperate to have McDonald's recruit for them. That is the only thing SDA wants in every deal they cut. Workers aren't getting higher wages or better conditions at Woolworths, Coles, Hungry Jack's, Kmart or the others. Workers get nothing but the SDA gets access to kids.

The supported bargaining authorisation decision actually explained what bargaining with SDA looks like. At [80] they said:

It is also significant that, as earlier stated, most of these 480 agreements were made a decade or more ago, indicating that the incidence of bargaining in the industry has declined to a significant degree. The SDA has bargained or is bargaining with some major fast food chains including KFC, Hungry Jack's, Grill'd, Taco Bell, Krispy Kreme and some Subway franchisees, but the agreements that have resulted have not led to rates of pay that are more than marginally above the FFI Award minimum rates. None of this is indicative of a current high level of successful bargaining in the industry or by the SDA.

So bargaining by SDA in leads to poor agreements. In the past, those agreements abolished penalty rates and other conditions. In return, employers recruited for SDA. Some still do.

Since 2016, workers have won so much more through RAFFWU. Maccas workers can also be represented by RAFFWU in bargaining at McDonald's. Get in touch to find out more and be involved.



RETAIL AND
FAST FOOD
WORKERS
UNION

Queer Caucus

The Retail and Fast Food Workers Union Queer caucus is getting revamped in 2026!

The queer caucus gives workers a space to come together with other queer workers in the same industry to discuss issues that affect them. This space is planned to focus on giving confidence to queer retail and fast food workers to organise within their workplaces, providing organiser

training, workshopping how to get over hurdles while organising and using real case studies to problem solve. This then has the added bonus of providing a pre-formed structure for us as queer workers to utilise when specific queer issues arise, for us to take action.

For example, in 2022, the queer caucus produced a TDoV video to be posted on the union's social media, highlighting that Trans rights are workers' rights. When

we need the union to take a position on issues that matter to us, we must have those structures in place, and this is what the RAFFWU queer caucus aims to do.

As our rights become increasingly fragile, our best protection comes from being organised. If you're queer and interested in joining the queer caucus, please reach out to an organiser or follow the directions on the RAFFWU website.

Bosses Launch Attacks on Award Conditions

The Modern Awards provide a base set of conditions on wages, penalty rates, overtime, rosters and other matters which apply to entire industries. Ever since we launched in 2016 we have been defending Modern Awards from attack by employers and their SDA. Since the SDA has helped employers undermine Award conditions in their Enterprise Agreements, employers have tried to then undermine the Awards themselves.

Examples include cutting the Sunday penalty rates. SDA had cut Sunday penalty rates in fast food to zero for decades. In retail, SDA cut penalty rates on Sunday from 100% to 50% at employers who recruited for them. So the employers teamed up in 2017 and cut Award penalty rates which impacted everyone.

In 2018, SDA tried to help fast food employers to casual work and cut overtime rights. We defeated those attacks but in 2020 they tried again. We defeated those callous attacks during the early part of the pandemic.

In 2023, a new process was launched which led to hearings in the Fair Work Commission in 2025 over a large number of

attacks on the General Retail Industry Award. The employers want split shifts, reduced breaks between work, abolition of conditions for salaried workers and hosts of other changes. Many of these are simply cuts agreed by SDA at employers like Coles, Woolworths, Kmart and others. RAFFWU has fought these attacks.

Since the hearings, an important decision in the Federal Court in FWO v Woolworths established a precedent on a range of important Award conditions. This has made even clearer that the attacks of the employers would have substantial negative effects on workers. We are now awaiting the decision of the Fair Work Commission in the ARA's case.

Abolishing Junior Rates

The Fair Work Commission has heard a special case about Junior Rates. Since the day we launched, RAFFWU has called for the abolition of discriminatory wage stealing junior rates. We know that the wage discrimination delivers windfall profits to mega corporations like McDonald's, Kmart, KFC, Hungry Jack's, Woolworths, Coles and others costs workers around \$4 Billion per year.

Maccas alone is estimated to extract over \$700 million a year from young workers. Worse, junior rates see birthday cuts to hours – a young worker replaced with an ever younger worker who is cheaper. This also means workers are kept in casual employment because that is the only real way to cut a workers hours as they get older. At Maccas and Kmart this sees over 80% of workers employed in insecure, unsafe casual employment.

We took our claim to abolish junior rates to every negotiation for a new agreement. In Better Read Than Dead (BRTD) we put in place structures to abolish junior rates – through the direct collective action of members. However, in workplaces where the SDA is in the boss' pocket, they have cut deals which maintain or worsen junior rates structures.

In response to RAFFWU campaigns, SDA filed a case in the Fair Work

Commission asking to entrench under 18 junior rates and remove them for workers 18 or older. However, as the case played out the SDA continued to cut new agreements which embedded the very junior rates they claim to want gone. Worse, in the FWC case they want workers under 18 to still be discriminated against. Instead of relying on a case, or a political fix, workers can be mobilised to defeat the rates in workplaces like we did at BRTD.

RAFFWU has participated in the case arguing discriminatory age based rates are unlawful and must be abolished. We argue they are contrary to international law and Australia's treaty obligations. We also argue Australian law means they must be abolished.

19. Junior rates cause young workers, often secondary school students, to have their child labour exploited more often by profiteers. To earn enough income for a loaf of bread, for rent, for water, for electricity, for school uniforms, for medicines and for all the other necessities of life, the child must work more hours. The existence of junior rates forces more children who live in poverty to work more hours to be able to survive.
20. This child labour exploitation impacts poorer children the most. They are more likely to be put to work and for more hours. They are more likely to abandon education to feed themselves and their families. They are more likely to be forced to abandon their education because of junior rates. These facts are notorious.
21. We recognise those same children would still need to work under the capitalist state with the abolition of junior rates. However, they would work as little as 40% of the hours they current work for the same income. It is notorious that this would see more children spending more time in education, with families and in communities. There is only positive benefit from the abolition of junior rates.
22. The claim child labour exploitation provides work opportunities otherwise not afforded children has been espoused by the profiteers of child labour exploitation for centuries. Profiteers of child labour exploitation celebrate the nimble small hands of children, the vulnerability that sees children less likely to raise safety concerns, the insecurity of children that means they are less likely to complain or make demands. Profiteers of child labour exploitation kept children in coal mines and at the looms.
23. A modern democracy should not be staffing its fast food outlets or retail stores with children to send mega-profits, billions of dollars, into the coffers of the rich. To the extent that children are provided an opportunity to learn work skills and share in the community of the workplace, they ought be fairly rewarded by equal pay for equal work, to meet a fair living standard and to meet their needs.

24. While we don't concede any incentive ought be given because the need for incentive does not exist, we submit the legislated wage discrimination of no superannuation for children working less than 30 hours a week is incentive enough to those who profit on child labour exploitation. That discrimination is not the subject of this application and will manifest irrespective the outcome of the application.

...

29. Junior rates cause employers to deliberately favour cheaper labour. To celebrate the birthday of a child in retail or fast food, an employer cuts their hours. It is the most clear reiteration of capitalist exploitation that a child has their hours cut in order for their employer to profit off the cheaper new child behind them.

...

As we go to print the case has wrapped up and we await the decision. However, it is a ruse to give others control over our exploitation.

By organising together we can end junior rates here and now – forever. That starts with getting organised and preparing collective action.

32. Young workers are already less safe at work by virtue of their precarious employment and their age. These facts are notorious. Junior rates increase their vulnerability and precarity, and devalue the relationship with their employer. That is, an exploiter of child labour is more likely to view the child worker as an expendable commodity because they will not be employing them in the near future. They will be replaced with the next child.

33. In this way, junior rates cause actual harm to child workers. Employers should be encouraged to build long term relationships with the children they employ. They should be positively compelled to provide children with actual job security. They should not be actively encouraged to make windfall profits at the expense of exploited child labourers. The first step to achieve this is to abolish all junior rates.

RETAIL AND FAST FOOD WORKERS UNION

MEMBERSHIP NOW FREE!

Crossword Puzzle page 32 >>>

Subject: RE: Provision of Employee Names

Apologies- I had provided the details of the new TMS to SDA via Email, as I was not aware of the recent change that we are no longer required to share such information with them. I appreciate the clarification and going forward, I will ensure this does not happen again.

1. Have you stopped providing the names of new employees to SDA? – YES, from today onwards
2. Did you previously provide the names of new employees to SDA? – YES
3. If you previously provided names to SDA, did you do that by email, over the phone or in person, or a combination of these? - EMAIL

Subject: RE: Provision of Employee Names

Good morning,

1. Yes I have stopped sending any details to the SDA.
2. Yes I previously sent their names to the SDA
3. Information was sent via reply to the SDA by email.

Kind Regards,

RAFFWU Exposes Coles and Woolworths Fraud on Privacy Commissioner

In recent years RAFFWU exposed massive privacy breaches affecting hundreds of thousands of workers across retail and fast food. We exposed employers providing SDA the names of workers – breaching the Privacy Act.

In 2019, the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) forced Spotless to compensate workers for giving AWU worker names without their consent or knowledge. They broke the law and a couple of dozen workers were compensated between \$3000 and \$6000 for the breach.

The privacy breaches in retail and fast food are a whole different scale. Hundreds of thousands of workers have had their privacy breached. RAFFWU represents workers at Coles, Woolworths and Hungry Jack's in special **representative complaints** about the privacy breaches. We demand the breaches must stop – but also that every impacted worker must be compensated. Since so many are children, we demand they each be compensated \$12,000.

Coles and Woolworths Lied

Coles and Woolworths did what they do best. They lied. They told the OAIC – the statutory body investigating privacy breaches – that they had not given any names to SDA. In response, the OAIC reported to RAFFWU that it was considering closing the complaints. It was outrageous. We know Coles and Woolworths lie to workers, customers and the public every day but lying about their systemic privacy breaches was a new level of contempt.

RAFFWU decided it was time to seek confirmation from the store based administrators at Coles and Woolworths that they had stopped giving names to SDA. So we wrote to each store asking them to confirm they had stopped breaching worker privacy and whether they had previously given the names of workers to SDA by email, phone or in person. The response was massive.

Store Administrators Expose Fraud Upon the OAIC

Hundreds of stores responded explaining they had given worker names to SDA for years. Some stores were still doing it. Every state, every territory, reported the conduct. It was as systemic as we had always alleged. We reported this to the OAIC who continues its investigations.

The response from Coles and Woolworths was swift but not swift enough. Coles shut down its email servers and sent out nationwide communications to not respond to RAFFWU. Gaggingly desperate to stop its fraud upon the OAIC being exposed. Woolworths contacted its administrators begging them to not reply to RAFFWU. None of it stopped hundreds of administrators exposing the truth.

Subject: Re: Provision of Employee Names

Hello,

- 1) Yes I have stopped providing the names of new employees to SDA
- 2) Yes I used to provide the names of new employees to SDA before
- 3) By emails (most of the times) as well as phone (sometimes). It included their names, employee numbers, base departments and their next shift,

Subject: RE: Provision of Employee Names

Morning,

1. NO - I was not aware we have to stop sending the SDA new employees names
2. Yes today I sent the names of new employees
3. It was by email as every Monday morning we get an email asking if there are new employees

Sorry for not knowing this practice is now prohibited no one has told me, I will stop replying to the emails

Kind regards,

Subject: Re: Provision of Employee Names

Hi there

- 1- We will stop as of this week,
- 2- Yes we were
- 3- Via email

Subject: Re: Provision of Employee Names

Morning,

1. Have you stopped providing the names of new employees to SDA? - YES
2. Did you previously provide the names of new employees to SDA? - In previous years. YES.
3. If you previously provided names to SDA, did you do that by email, over the phone or in person, or a combination of these? EMAIL

Kind Regards,

Subject: RE: Provision of Employee Names

Below are the answers to your questions:

1. I have stopped providing names of new employees to SDA. This practise was stopped upon notification of the change in privacy.
2. I did provide names of new employees to SDA in the past as this was how I Was trained.
3. The information was provided by email in response to the weekly SDA email received each Monday.

Coles and Woolworths then embarrassed themselves by writing to RAFFWU claiming we had done something wrong. Coles threatened their own staff for exposing the Head Office fraud. Woolworths claimed laws might have been broken. The only laws broken were the systemic privacy breaches affecting hundreds of thousands of workers, and the fraud upon the OAIC trying to cover it up. **As we go to print, Coles and Woolworths have still not declared to shareholders or the ASX the contingent liability of compensation which could be in the billions.**



Membership Fees at RAFFWU

We launched nine years ago and in that time we have grown into a union of thousands of members in hundreds of workplaces across Australia. We have launched and won campaigns which have returned over a billion dollars per year in penalty rates, casual loadings, overtime rates and more at many of Australia's largest retailers and fast food companies.

Since we launched in November 2016, membership fees have increased twice – in 2021 and 2024. When we increased them in 2021 we promised to apply the full

value of that increase – 10% - to our Defence & Strategic Litigation Fund used for critical support of members engaged in strike action and on strategic litigation in defence of member rights. Our foresight means that fund is growing and will help protect members in the years to come because 10% of all our fees is being built up. The 2024 increase of 10% recognised minimum wages had grown by 27% since we launched.

In 2025 we consulted with members again about a further modest increase. Following the

positive feedback and the decision of our Annual General Meeting, the fees will increase by 8% for non-casual members 18 years or older (ranging from 60c to 90c more per week) and casual membership fees by 2% (10c more per week.) Under 18 fees would remain free. These increases will not apply until July 2026.

At these levels, RAFFWU fees continue to be among the lowest union fees in Australia. Fee waivers also remain available to members in accordance with our Rules.

Membership	Fee Until June 2026		July 2026 Fee with Inc.	
	Monthly	Weekly	Monthly	Weekly
Contracted 20 or more hours/week	\$47.20	\$10.90	\$51.00	\$11.80
Contracted less than 20 hours/week	\$31.50	\$7.30	\$34.00	\$7.90
Casual 18 or Older	\$19.10	\$4.40	\$19.50	\$4.50
Under 18	\$ –	\$ –	\$ –	\$ –



Palestine Solidarity

At the time of writing in October 2025, the ongoing genocide in Gaza perpetrated by the state of Israel has led to the murder of at least 67,000 Palestinians, though many estimate the true number to be far higher. Israel has continued to bomb Gaza despite having agreed to a ceasefire deal.

RAFFWU stands against genocide and apartheid all over the world. It is the responsibility of all unions and unionists to heed the call of Palestinian Trade Unions to act in solidarity with the Palestinian people. In July 2025, Israeli military forces arrested activists attempting to deliver baby formula and

medical supplies to Gaza via boat. Chris Smalls, a union organiser who led the first successful unionisation effort of Amazon workers in the United States, was among them. Chris, who was brutally assaulted while in Israeli custody, made the call for real union solidarity with Palestine:

“

People have to understand that unions have a responsibility to protect, to be the shield for the working class. And that doesn't exclude Palestinian people... an injury to one is an injury to all.

– Chris Smalls

”

Throughout 2025 RAFFWU members have turned out on the streets to stand in solidarity with Palestine. On 3 August, dozens of RAFFWU members marched together at the historic March for Humanity Rally in which 300,000 people marched across the Sydney Harbour Bridge, despite atrocious weather and NSW police attempting to stop the rally taking place through the courts.

A few weeks later, on 24 August, hundreds of thousands of marched in a Nationwide March for Palestine. RAFFWU members joined the rallies to march together in capital cities.

These protests were enormous in scale and proved a tipping point in public discourse about opposition to the Albanese government's position on Palestine.





In September, the Australian government formally recognised Palestine as a sovereign state.

Despite its symbolic gesturing, the Australian government continued to act in concert with the Israeli government by supplying weapons of war. Australia continues to ship of military supplies to Israel, including F-35 fighter jet parts. The Albanese government has refused to impose sanctions on Israel despite the clear violations of international law and perpetration of war crimes.

UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese's October 2025 report on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories explains the complicity of states like Australia who have enabled the Israeli state's genocide.



The ongoing genocide in Gaza is a collective crime, sustained by the complicity of influential Third States that have enabled longstanding systemic violations of international law by Israel. Framed by colonial narratives that dehumanize the Palestinians, this live-streamed atrocity has been facilitated through Third States' direct support, material aid, diplomatic protection and, in some cases, active participation.

It has exposed an unprecedented chasm between peoples and their governments, betraying the trust on which global peace and security rest.

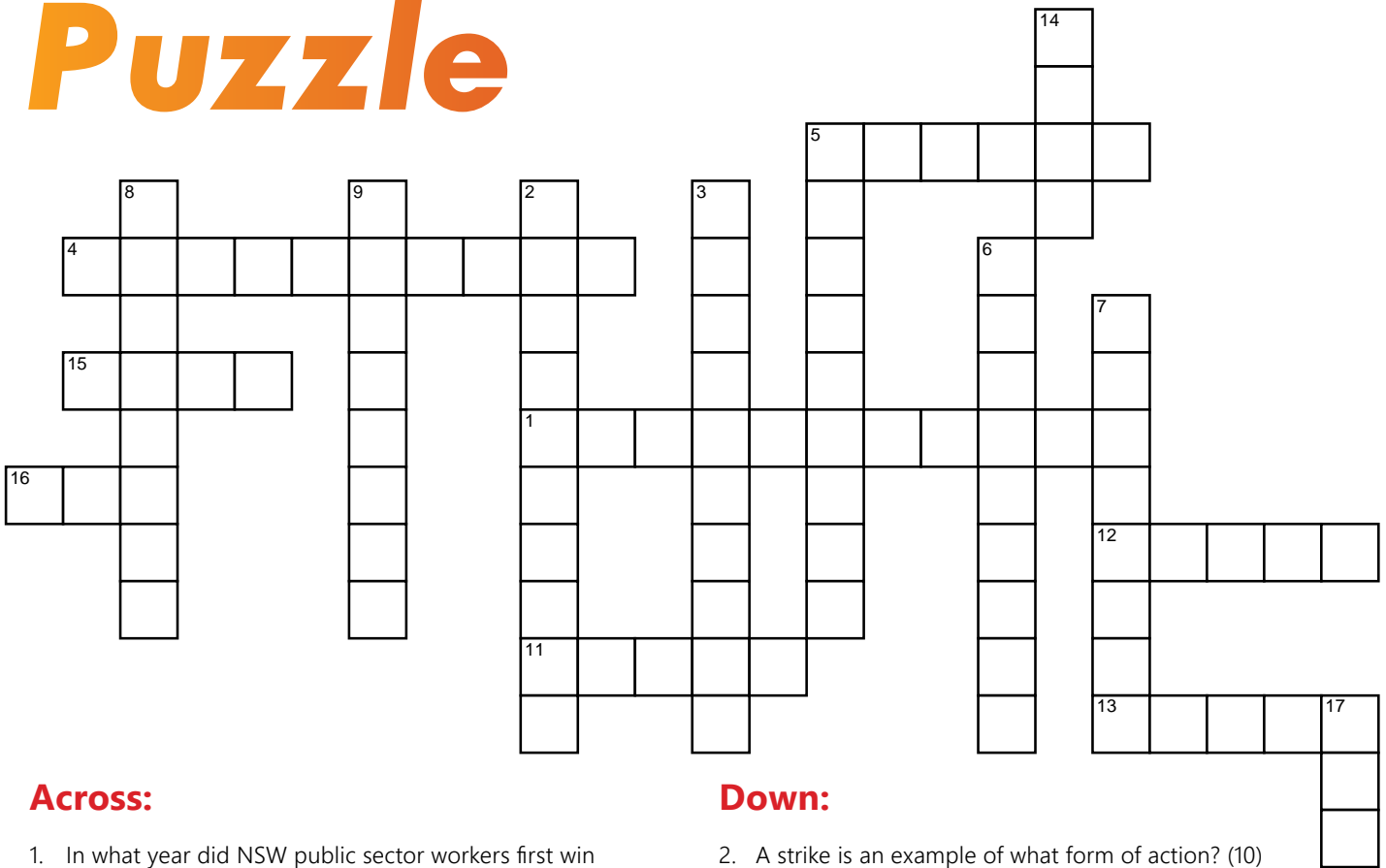
The world now stands on a knife-edge between the collapse of the international rule of law and hope for renewal. Renewal is only possible if complicity is confronted, responsibilities are met and justice is upheld.

– Francesca Albanese



The global Palestine solidarity movement will continue into 2026, and RAFFWU will always stand with the Palestinian people. Check out the Boycott, Divest and Sanction (BDS) page on our website and join us on the streets.

Crossword Puzzle



Across:

1. In what year did NSW public sector workers first win the right to four weeks of annual leave? 19 __ (11)
4. In which country did Woolworths Supermarket workers take strike action during their 2024 contract negotiations? (10)
11. Workers at which technology retailer were the first in Australian history to take national strike action and run a successful Vote No campaign leading to improved wages, leave and rostering rights? (5)
12. When can your employer insist on coming into a medical consultation with you regarding a workplace injury? (5)
13. In 2020 what country saw the largest general strike in human history, with an estimated 250 million people participating in the action? (5)
15. Better Read Than _____ bookstore workers took industrial action in 2021, the first industrial action used in the retail sector in generations and won an industry leading agreement. (4)
16. What is the current acronym of the union that Nelson Mandela thanked for their solidarity during the global anti-apartheid South Africa campaign? This support took the form of donations of food, medicine and clothing, as well as direct action in the form of refusing to load or unload South African cargo ships. (3)

Down:

2. A strike is an example of what form of action? (10)
3. Woolworths workers in which union town in NSW were the first to strike in RAFFWU's 2023 #SuperStrike? This industrial action and subsequent media attention lead to the largest No vote on an EBA in Woolworths Supermarket history with 38% voting No, an increase from 6.5% in 2018. (10)
5. Which government was in power when weakening workers' rights to participate in solidarity industrial action were introduced? These changes have been maintained by all governments since 1996. (9)
6. A judge made a statement in their decision 'recognising the service to the national interest by the Union' when RAFFWU member Chiara won a landmark court case against which fast food giant? (9)
7. In 1966 which Indigenous stock workers led a successful strike calling for an end to the racist wage system, for land rights and for self-determination? (8)
8. 4 or more RAFFWU members in a workplace can endorse someone into what position to represent their co-workers and lead them in action? (8)
9. What union (as an acronym) in the USA took 160,000 workers in the entertainment industry out on strike in 2023, winning better pay and conditions? (8)
14. Named after a colour, which ban led initially by construction workers saw direct action aimed at homophobia? (4)
17. What is the first name of the young worker who helped expose the coercion, trickery and other unconscionable conduct of SDA and bosses preying on children? (3)



Committee Members



Carolina Cooksey
President
president@raffwu.org.au

Carolina has worked in the retail and fast food industry for over five years and is currently a union delegate at Better Read Than Dead. She was active in the landmark Better Read Than Dead campaign which secured the best retail agreement in Australia through direct action. Carolina has witnessed the collective power of workers firsthand and is passionate about encouraging younger workers like herself to participate in grassroots organising.



Rhiannon Howard
Vice President
vicepresident@raffwu.org.au

In Rhiannon's six years in retail, she has worked as a sales assistant in the United States and Australia. Rhiannon's involvement with RAFFWU began in 2021 when she and her fellow workers at Dangerfield engaged in a successful campaign demanding security and up-to-date safety protocols. Rhiannon is currently a union delegate at the Dangerfield Flinders Street store.

Rhiannon believes in the collective power that retail and fast-food workers hold together. Rhiannon is interested in helping younger and minority workers understand their power and rights in order to build safer and fairer workplaces. Rhiannon holds a Bachelor of Media and Communication (Cinema) and will soon undertake a Juris Doctor.



Loukas Kakogiannis
Secretary
secretary@raffwu.org.au

Prior to starting at RAFFWU, Loukas worked at Woolworths for 9 years. As a delegate, he led a groundbreaking safety campaign calling upon Woolworths to put the safety of staff before profits, represented RAFFWU members in bargaining, and applied to terminate Woolworths' dodgy SDA agreement that stripped billions of dollars in penalty rates. At RAFFWU, he organised the 2019 campaign at Better Read Than Dead bookstore that secured the best conditions in the retail sector, and the 2023 #Superstrike campaign which saw the first national strikes at supermarkets in Australian history. In recent years, he took on the role of National Industrial Officer where he provided expert advice and representation to members on issues from roster changes to unfair discipline, safety, underpayments, and more. Loukas is committed to ensuring RAFFWU delivers real fighting unionism that backs in member action every step of the way.



James Searle
Treasurer
treasurer@raffwu.org.au

James has over 10 years experience in retail and fast food including at Pizza Hut, First Choice Liquor, Vintage Cellars & BWS.

As a student activist, James led successful campaigns to restore funding to student union representation and welfare services and to return important facilities and amenities lost as a result of voluntary student unionism. In 2012, James fought for and won fair treatment and pay for casual workers and in 2015 James successfully fought to prevent the privatisation of a campus co-operative.



Allister Small
Committee Member

Hi, my name is Allister (He/ Him). I have worked in retail for 10 years (in both fashion retail and pet care) and joined RAFFWU in 2019. Both of my parents worked in retail

so I became acutely aware of the importance of the work despite the often poor conditions. The retail struggle for respect is very close to my heart.

I have been involved with workplace organising and was elected as a delegate in May 2024 as well as Health and Safety Representative for my Designated Working Group.

We hold a lot of power as retail workers and we saw that during the pandemic when we were forced to show up as essential workers despite us being paid award rates. I believe nothing is "too good" for the working class and that unskilled labour doesn't exist.



Ally Bodnaruk
Committee Member

Ally has worked in retail for fifteen years, the last nine with Harry Hartog/Berkelouw Books. She joined RAFFWU in 2024 to help her fellow workers campaign for better working

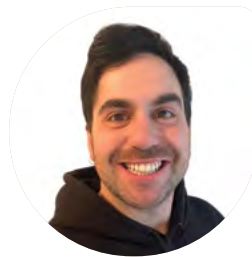
conditions and is a delegate for full-time workers across the company. Taking steps to improve her workplace for herself and her colleagues with RAFFWU has been an incredibly rewarding experience and is one that Ally wants all retail and fast food workers to have.



Em Bleby
Committee Member

Em has been a retail worker for 7 years in both South Australia and Victoria. Em has been a key player in unionising the Aesop workforce in Melbourne. They have

helped organise the workforce, and represented their co-workers in Enterprise bargaining meetings, which seek to ensure a liveable wage, respect and dignity from the company, and transparency in. They are currently studying a Bachelor of Law. Em believes that a fair workplace is one that is inclusive, accessible, and protective of marginalised people.



Harry Millward
Committee Member

Harry has been a member of RAFFWU since early 2020 and wants to give back to the union using the experience he has gathered since then.

Harry cut his teeth in a national campaign at JB Hi-Fi during the COVID-19 pandemic "essential worker" era, in the RAFFWU Queer Caucus, and used that experience to help organise renters in the Renters And Housing Union (RAHU) as a member, delegate, assistant treasurer, and two-term secretary.

Harry is excited to join the RAFFWU committee and use all of that he has learned over the years to make sure we have the best fighting union we can.



Ashley Pardey
Committee Member

Ashley has spent over 25 years in Australian retail, starting with a school-based traineeship at Cornetts' IGA in my hometown of Moura, and now working at Woolworths in Brisbane. His time on the shop floor has given him a firsthand view of a worrying trend: big corporations are becoming less accountable and less trustworthy in how they treat their staff – their best assets!

This is why Ashley feels that the union movement is essential for workplace fairness in retail. Ashley joined RAFFWU in 2023, quickly became a Union Delegate, and immediately focused on recruiting new members and building collective power.

When Ashley isn't working or delegating, you can find him busy with film projects around Brisbane, spending time with family and friends, or researching family history through genealogy and DNA.



Joshua Reinecker
Committee Member

Josh has worked at Woolworths since 2001 and has been a proud RAFFWU member since 2017.

Appointed as a delegate in 2024, he played an active role in the Woolworths Enterprise Bargaining Agreement campaign – from protected industrial action and the Superstrike to serving on the bargaining team and giving evidence in the Federal Court case. He also gave evidence in Canberra to the Senate Select Committee on Supermarket Pricing, calling on Parliament to act on the exploitative practices of the supermarket duopoly.

Josh is committed to helping RAFFWU grow as a bold, democratic, and worker-led union that fights for fair pay and respect.



Roe Buchanan
Committee Member

Roe has been in the retail industry for 5 years, first joining RAFFWU in 2022 and has been a workplace delegate and on the bargaining committee at Jaycar fighting to secure fair

pay and a living wage.

Roe believes that the only way to secure fair pay, fair conditions, and secure employment is an active and engaged worker-led organisation which will fight for workers' rights and hold employers accountable to their obligations.

Roe is a proudly Queer unionist and believes that it is incumbent on all employers to provide a safe, respectful, and supportive workplace for all workers.

As a member of the committee, Roe will continue the fight for a living wage, strong worker protections, and a fairer go for all retail and fast food workers.



Liska Fell
Committee Member

Liska has worked at Apple for four years. As a delegate at Apple Charlestown she helped promote RAFFWU's campaign for a better enterprise agreement with better pay

and conditions for workers. She holds a Bachelor of Languages (Honours) in Chinese Translation. Liska has been inspired by the ability of union action to create historic change both in her workplace and others and believes that union membership is the key to ensuring workers are afforded their rights and to improving conditions for everyone.



Rose Gosper
Committee Member

Rose has worked in retail for over 15 years. She has worked for both small and large retailers, including roles at various print shops, Franklins Supermarket, and currently

retail tile sales. Rose holds a Bachelor of Visual Communications.

Rose believes that the immense collective power of the retail and fast food workforce has long gone underutilised, allowing the erosion of workers rights. She is proud to be a part of a grassroots union that is uniting this workforce to fight back for the dignity and pay that they deserve.



Stephanie Wickham
Committee Member

Steph has worked in retail for almost 15 years; working in small family run businesses in nipaluna/Hobart, then to EB Games and Dangerfield/Princess Highway in naarm/Melbourne. She has been taking initiative as an organic leader in her formative years and is now a RAFFWU delegate for full time workers at Factory X. Steph is currently running the flagship Princess Highway store in Fitzroy. Steph holds a BA of Design Arts in Fashion and Costume from LCI Melbourne.

Steph is driven by diversity in the workplace and cultivates a thriving community space wherever she leads. She dismantles the typical "hierarchy" structure in her workspace and advocates a workplace free from the individual sales performance pressures and predatory rostering behaviours that a casualised workforce exploits. Steph is keenly interested in supporting workers new to joining RAFFWU and wishes to see the end of junior rates in the industry.



**JOIN RAFFWU
& CHECK OUT
OUR SOCIALS**



Contact Your Organiser

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NSW, ACT & Sydney	Kat Gerritsen	0478 747 553	kgerritsen@raffwu.org.au
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All other localities		1300 723 398	contact@raffwu.org.au