



The State of the union

Upping the ante against O'Farrell

By LOUISE THROWER

LOCAL unions are gearing up for a series of meetings opposing state government funding and job cuts.

Some 35 workers representing 15 unions gathered at the Workers Club on Monday for Goulburn and District Unions' annual assembly.

Guest speaker, Unions NSW secretary Mark Lennon, urged people to stand up and tell their stories.

He told attendants that Premier Barry O'Farrell's agenda did not advance working people's interests and his agenda was about job cuts.

The crowd heard from school and TAFE teachers, nurses, prison officers, mental health workers, police and hospital employees concerned about potential privatisation of catering and cleaning.

Australian Council of Trade Unions community organiser Alison Rahill described it as a worthwhile meeting.

"There was a unifying theme throughout the night that because everyone is working in their own workplace 'silo,' they weren't hearing what was happening in other sectors," she said.

"Jobs are being cut, workers not replaced, their workload increases. There's a general anticipation that it may take a while to feel the impact."

Attendants committed to devoting more volunteers hours on particular issues. It starts with a 'community day of action' at the Workers Club from 6pm next Monday, with a focus on public education.



UNITING: Representatives from Goulburn's unions met at an annual assembly at the Workers Club on Monday where Unions NSW secretary Mark Lennon (wearing the red tie) was guest speaker.

It continues on Sunday, November 18 with the NSW Teachers' Federation community day at the Belmore Park rotunda.

Union reps on Monday feared Goulburn would suffer further under the state's agenda. Already, more than 50 jobs have been slashed across Corrective Services, the Lands Department and Industry and Investment.

Prison Officers Vocational Branch organiser Owen O'Neill said Goulburn Jail had been hit

very hard with the loss of 26 jobs and further rationalisation at the Clinton St regional office was impacting on the prison's daily business.

"Administration staff took care of financial issues for inmates but now that responsibility is lumped on a group of people who are finding it hard to cope with the workload," he told the *Post*.

Mr O'Neill is also concerned about the increasing casualisa-

tion of the workforce. He says this does not provide a long-term benefit, provide security or put money into the local economy.

Rail, Tram and Bus Union organiser Greg Price told the *Post* there had been a "relentless program" to reduce Countrylink staff at Goulburn Railway Station in the past four years.

The number had dropped from 15 to 12, then nine. Now there's a review underway to cut another

three positions, Mr Price says.

"Every time they cut staff, the ability to service the station and the public is reduced," he said.

Mr Price said CCTV cameras installed to improve security after one round of cuts were hardly an effective measure when footage was monitored from Campbelltown station. Moreover, they did not prevent incidents from occurring.

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