



# Oil workers set for 20pc pay rise

## EXCLUSIVE

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Offshore workers have backed a historic agreement that delivers immediate pay rises of up to 20 per cent and converts casuals to permanent employment in a deal that unions will use as a template to lift pay and conditions in the oil and gas industry.

More than 180 workers at an offshoot of engineering company Monadelphous, which provides offshore maintenance and industrial services to companies includ-

ing Woodside, Shell, BHP and INPEX, backed the deal which followed the first union strike on an offshore platform for decades.

The agreement is a significant victory for the Offshore Alliance — a partnership between the Australian Workers Union and the Maritime Union of Australia.

Under the deal, the pay of the lowest-paid individual worker will jump from \$145,000 to \$184,000, rising to more than \$200,000 by 2022. The wages of electrical workers will increase from \$160,000 to \$203,000, rising up to \$230,000 over the term of the agreement.

AWU national secretary Daniel Walton said the conversion of a below-standard non-union agreement to a union agreement that could deliver pay rises and permanent employment to two-thirds of an entirely casualised workforce was a significant victory for the workers.

"This is one of the single biggest Australian union wins of the century. Not just on the numbers but on impact," Mr Walton told *The Weekend Australian*. "Workers at Monadelphous, like most workers in the oil and gas industry, were not receiving what their labour was worth. We've

fixed that with this agreement."

The agreement covers workers employed by M Maintenance Ser-

vices and applies to the INPEX platforms in Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

It converts the company's entirely casual workforce to a majority permanent workforce. About 130 offers of permanent employment have been made to employees covered by the agreement.

Workers will receive an immediate 18-20 per cent uplift in rates of pay on the commencement of the deal, which includes annual wage increases of 3 per cent, 3.5 per cent and 4 per cent.

The Offshore Alliance intends to approach other operators performing similar work in the offshore sector including UGL, Trace

(Broadspectrum), Veolia, AGC, and Legeneering Australia.

In a statement, Monadelphous said the offshore workforce at the company-owned entity M Maintenance Services "voted by a clear majority in favour of the renewal of the enterprise agreement".

"We have worked closely with our employees and union bargaining representatives throughout the negotiation period to achieve this positive outcome for all parties," the company said.

"Our focus remains on the continued delivery of safe, reliable and productive services."

Australian Mines and Metals Association chief executive Steve

Knott expressed scepticism about the union flow-on claims.

"Like all enterprise bargaining, the terms and conditions of the agreement are a matter for the employer and its employees, based on their unique operating requirements.

"Whether similar terms and conditions are picked up elsewhere in the offshore industry remains to be seen.

"It's typical for unions to claim an agreement they've endorsed to their members is some sort of game-changer."

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