

## **John Ellery – Candidate for Divisional Secretary – CEPU Comms Division Elections 2023**

I have been a Communications Industry Union member for my entire working life. That began in 1975 at the (then) Post Master Generals department (PMG), the fore runner of the now split Telstra and Australia Post. I began as a Trainee Tech Officer, and worked through a number of sections in the Telstra Research Labs (TRL), finishing in 1994 as a high level tech officer in the High Voltage section as the Lab Manager, looking after HV test equipment, and running interstate data gathering experiments in North Queensland, Darwin, Sydney – wherever there were lightning events upsetting network equipment. I was TRL sub-Branch President, shop steward and OH&S rep, as well as being on the ATEA Victorian Branch Committee of Management.

I was asked to come into the Victorian ATEA office in April 1994 for a 3 month “project” to progress a recruiting campaign, particularly in the call centre areas of Telstra. I’m still there, 29 years later, having filled almost every position in the Victorian Branch (now the combined Vic/NSW T&S Branch), including Branch Vice Pres, Branch President, Asst Secretary, Secretary, organiser, industrial officer. I know what it takes to competently run a large Branch during difficult times, and therefore the running of the Divisional office, as Divisional Secretary, is clearly within my qualifications and experience (and union philosophy) to accomplish.

The Division (and particularly the Divisional office) needs to take a good hard look at what it takes to provide industrial leadership to the membership. It needs some hard nosed, experienced leadership that doesn’t jump into bed with the management of its main employers, and truly stand up for the rights, working conditions, and general progression of the membership , and not themselves personally. The membership should not be taken for granted, and a major education program needs to be undertaken about what is the real role of the Union, and instil confidence in the membership to fight a decent battle to improve the day to day outcomes in the workplace.

In the words of the legendary English working class songwriter and activist Billy Bragg –

“ There’s power in a factory, power in the land, Power in the hand of the worker, But it all amounts to nothing if together we don’t stand, There is power in a union.

The union forever defending our rights, Down with the blackleg, all workers unite, With our brothers and our sisters, together we will stand, There is power in the union”

**Support a change at the Divisional level of the Union; Vote 1 - John Ellery for Divisional Secretary**