

Val Butler biography:

I was part of **Joan Doyle's 'Members First' Team** that won the CWU Branch election in 2003. Prior to that I worked in Telstra for 13 years; I was a very active union delegate at my worksite. Telstra, was an anti-union employer, was going through great upheaval and many job losses. I gained a lot of experience in industrial relations on the job representing Telstra workers; and prior to the 2003 CWU elections I represented Australia Post workers in the AIRC (before the Fair Work Commission).

When the **'Members First' Team** won the elections in 2003, we ran in those elections because we wanted to create a **strong, active, member focused branch that took its lead from the members in regard to campaigns. We wanted to educate and empower members to have a go. We wanted a branch that, most of all was accountable to the members, the people who pay the wages of those officials who represent them.**

I started working full-time in the CWU Vic Branch in 2006, mainly dealing with Telecommunications Industry issues and helping out members from Australia Post when needed.

From 2003 to 2019 the CWU Vic Branch has been a campaigning union that has led the way in industrial disputes in both Australia Post and the Telecommunications industry sector; we didn't always win but we did have many wins and in other instances we were able to modify the plans of the employer.

I have represented members of the CWU in the Fair Work Commission, the Magistrates Court, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, and the Victorian Equal Opportunity Commission. These matters have included Unfair Dismissals, Adverse Actions, underpayments cases in the Magistrates Court, and Age, Disability and Pregnancy Discrimination matters in the Human Rights jurisdictions. I have also prepared cases for the Australia Post Board of Reference when required.

I hold a Diploma of Law from Charles Darwin University and am slowly grinding away at the Degree. My skills are used only to the benefit of the union's members. Industrial law is a very complex area and it is very hard to bring a case or have a win in a lot of instances, but where a member has a good case, and we are not putting the member at risk of costs, I will always have a go.

'Being Union' is in my DNA. I believe workers need and deserve the best representation when it comes to their working life. That means educating and skilling members on what it takes to win. Campaigning hard to make sure that workers do not get left behind; and that they are aware of what is happening with their jobs. Taking up the important issues both at a community and political level because in our industries, often, all of those things overlap.

I am a candidate for the CWU Vic Branch Election in the Lines & General Industry Section. There are three positions I am standing for, Branch Committee of Management, Divisional Executive Member and Divisional Conference Member.

See also my Open Letter to Members – 'Why I support the Union Strong – Union Active Team.'