

AMWU seeks assurance on Cadbury jobs

by Jim H.

The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union (AMWU) is working to ensure the jobs of almost 2,000 Cadbury workers remain in Australia, after the company accepted a takeover bid from US food giant, Kraft. Until now Cadbury has been a British owned company, closely tied to the Cadbury family.

Cadbury has two factories in Australia; at Claremont in southern Tasmania and Ringwood in Victoria

Kraft has taken over Cadbury in England for the price of 400 million pounds.

In Australia, AMWU Tasmanian Secretary, Anne Urquhart, said that the union was seeking meetings with management about the future of its operations. "Cadbury is a very profitable business as it stands and we are waiting to hold discussions with Kraft to ensure Cadbury has a clear future in Australia."

Ms Urquhart said that workers are anxiously awaiting news on the security of their jobs. "The situation

at the moment is that workers have not been told what their future will be. The only thing that is certain is that the former CEO and board members personally will gain enormously from the takeover, while workers have had no guarantees."

The union is also concerned by the pattern of management in takeover situations to look at short-term options, such as selling off parts of the business to pay down debt. "We do not believe such a move would be in the long-term interest of the company, the workers or consumers who enjoy their products. Rationalisation to achieve short-term share-price spikes at the expense of long-term planning and investment has been a hallmark of the disasters of the financial crisis and ruined many good businesses."

The case highlights the need for action to safeguard against takeovers that pose a threat to the interests of Australia.

The main concerns should be jobs, the wellbeing of the Australian people and developing a sound economy. While Cadbury has never been an Australian owned and controlled company, it has



provided jobs. The problem with the takeover, as tends to be the case of takeovers, is that there is likely to be a process of rationalisation of international operations. This could have a serious impact on jobs in Australia.

At present, these corporations have a green light to do whatever they wish, with no accountability to the wellbeing

of others. Australians have good reason to demand at least such accountability. Failure of governments to deliver means that it is up to the Australian working class to take a lead in ensuring the future of our nation.

Like in the case of Cadbury, workers and their representative organisations have a right and obligation to stand up.

Masters of war push to militarise schools

by Nick G.

*"Come you masters of war,
You that build all the guns,
You that build the death planes,
You that build the big bombs,
You that hide behind walls,
You that hide behind desks,
I just want you to know
I can see through your masks"*

So began Bob Dylan's 1963 song directed at the military-industrial complex of US imperialism. It was a song whose rejection of militarism was characteristic of the sixties generation, and of an era which ultimately saw the removal of school cadets from Australian high schools.

In the wake of its setbacks in the Iraq and Afghanistan invasions, US imperialism is tightening its controls over the education sector. In its own homeland, the process has accelerated with the elevation of former Chicago schools boss Arne Duncan to the position of Obama's Education Secretary.

Duncan's legacy in the Chicago public schools system is largely one of privatising schools by handing them over to charter schools operators.

However, part of his time there was



spent putting the US military back into schools.

"Chicago's school system is currently the most militarised in the country," wrote one observer, "boasting five military academies, nearly three dozen smaller Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps programs within existing high schools, and numerous middle school Junior ROTC programs. More troubling yet, the military academies he's started are nearly all located in low-income, minority neighbourhoods."

"This merging of military training and education naturally raises concerns about whether such academies will be not just education centres, but recruitment centres as well."

On February 17, in the Adelaide



Advertiser, there was a disturbing headline reading "Schools double as defence academies".

It was reporting a joint media release by Greg Combet, Federal Minister for Defence Procurement and Jane Lomax-Smith, SA Minister for Education, identifying three SA high schools as having been chosen to "lead a new \$5.7 million program that will prepare young South Australians for jobs in the defence industry".

One of the three schools was named two years ago as the partner to US imperialist military corporation Raytheon in a major sponsorship deal that provides Raytheon with access to students in the school's specialist gifted and talented program.

The three lead schools in the new initiative will be required to develop curriculum in the areas of maths, science and technology that serves the needs of the burgeoning military sector in South Australia.

It is planned to identify a further five partner schools by mid-year.

The decision was timed to coincide with the visit of US Deputy Defence Secretary Bill Lynn, visiting Adelaide to inspect a new naval repair base featuring the largest ship-lift in the southern hemisphere.

Lynn was clearly interested in the use of the facility by the US imperialist Pacific Fleet, the largest in their Navy. Those ships are currently serviced and maintained in Singapore and Japan.

Meanwhile, more than 100 German troops were bashing the bush around Woomera, test-driving their Boxer armoured vehicle, Weisel reconnaissance vehicle and Mikado aerial surveillance drone. Live rounds are being used as part of establishing the vehicles' suitability for use against the people of Afghanistan.

Australians need to firmly reject the militarisation of schools and their curriculum. US and other foreign military forces have no place on Australian soil.