

Monday, 11 May 2020

Vale Jack Munday

Statement attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

The union movement is devastated to hear of the passing of Jack Munday and we offer our condolences to Judy, family and his comrades.

Jack changed the face and direction of unionism in our country and was part of transforming the status and jobs of “brickies” into jobs with rights and respect.

Jack led the NSW BLF from 1968 to 1975 and under his leadership pioneered the “green bans” movement forming alliances with local residents to save the environment, our heritage and to stand up to injustice.

Because of Jack’s leadership bushland around Sydney was saved, from local pockets to the botanical gardens. Low income housing was saved, as was important heritage areas such as The Rocks. If it were not for Jack’s union these parts of Sydney would have been demolished by developers.

The BLF also initiated the first “pink ban” refusing building works at Macquarie University in solidarity with the dismissal of a gay academic.

The members of Jack’s union won significant increases in pay, workplace safety and working conditions, despite the opposition of powerful developers and Governments. Jack was an extremely principled leader who adhered to highly democratic practices and a belief in maximum terms for elected leaders. What was achieved during the relatively short time of his leadership by the union was remarkable.

Whilst Jack’s achievements have been celebrated by the establishment today with even a street named after him in The Rocks, he and his union came under sustained attack at the time from those in power.

Jack believed in the broader collective achievement of the working class and aspired to a better world for all.

Vale to a man who reshaped Australian union history, whose legacy is there for all to see in the beauty of Sydney and whose principles shone through until the end.

ENDS

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