



[Broken – The ongoing saga of the HSU's Number 1 Branch](#)

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Branch Number 1 of the HSU has had its fair share of troubles for many years now and its membership must be among the most patient union members on earth.

Or perhaps the most frustrated.

The union members have seen their funds evaporate under Jeff Jackson with allegations of misuse of members funds for all kinds of things including brothel visits, holidays, alcohol, and expensive meals. Since then they have seen Jeff's ex-wife Kathy Jackson calling the shots while bully boy Marco Bolano was at the helm.

Last year the union members of the various branches voted in the HSU elections. After an initial delay due to a court decision regarding one of the candidates Diana Asmar and her eligibility to stand members of Number 1 Branch finally had a chance to clean up their branch of the union.

Or so they thought...

Members voted to remove the Jackson faction by sending Marco Bolano packing and electing Diana Asmar as branch secretary. Members thought their troubles were over and they would have the chance to rebuild the troubled branch.

They were wrong.

Both the NSW branch and the Number 3 Branch in Victoria saw the Jackson faction eradicated at the election, however the Number 1 Branch saw some from the Marco Bolano ticket get elected including the role of Assistant Secretary/Treasurer and some members of the Business Committee Of Management or BCOM.

There are currently four members of the union management in Victoria off work on workers compensation at the taxpayers expense. Three of these are particularly interesting.

Marco Bolano has been on compensation payments since being stood down from the role of Number 1 Branch Secretary by an administrator appointed by a Federal Court judge,

and then losing a democratic election. That is called “being bullied” by some right-wing journalists and shock-jocks, to the rest of us it’s known as ‘just deserts”.

Kathy Jackson now forced to pay off her own credit cards without the aid of the Number 3 Branch cheque account also finds herself off on stress leave with John Q Taxpayer picking up the tab.

However it is Leonie Flynn and the circumstances her being off on “stress leave” I wanted to look at today.

Leonie Flynn was elected as the Assistant Secretary of the Number 1 Branch of the HSU by the members and has thus far failed in her official capacity, however there is a question as to where the blame lies for this.

What Flynn has done may in fact be the biggest favor done for the members since their fellow members gave Bolano the boot.

Kathy Jackson and Marco Bolano seem to be spending their time off on compensation doing radio interviews with shock-jocks and television appearances, as this must somehow help soothe the pain of the horrendous mental anguish they are clearly suffering. Clearly...



Marco Bolano - struggling at home on a huge compensation claim at the taxpayers expense

Meanwhile Leonie Flynn has reportedly become a prisoner in her own home.

Leonie Flynn who is currently on stress leave from the stricken branch has spent her time drafting a 33 page long document which details allegations of serious breaches of the union rules since the election of Diana Asmar as secretary. A link to the document is

below.

[Leonie Flynn Statement](#)

These allegations include the preventing of Leonie Flynn from performing the role that she was elected to perform, the roles of Assistant Secretary and in particular Treasurer.

However other allegations include the union being run by Kimberly Kitching who was appointed as the unions General Manager upon Diana Asmar being elected as Secretary but not elected by members. The use of union staff and funds to run pre-selection campaigns for ALP candidacy for Federal seats for Kitching, and massive legal bills being paid with questions of them being for legal fees due to [Diana Asmars woes with the ombudsman in regards to events at Darebin council](#) of which she is a former Mayor.

Still more allegations involve the completing of Right Of Entry tests by others for union organisers, which is illegal and equivalent to filling out a statutory declaration for somebody else, the disappearance of telephone equipment from the office, and also the approval of travel expenses.

If these allegations have merit, and they certainly appear detailed and are backed up by many others I have spoken to, then the current running of the Number 1 Branch leaves a lot to be desired.

For a team that ran their election campaign under the banner of transparency, team Asmar certainly needs to be transparent with the members now and provide some answers to the many allegations.

Last week I tried to contact Diana Asmar and Kimberly Kitching to hear their side of the story.

I emailed the address given on the HSU National site for Diana Asmar and it bounced back as unrecognised.

I rang the branch to get the correct email addresses and was told by the receptionist that I was not allowed to have them and even she didn't have them. All correspondence to Asmar or Kitching had to go through a bloke by the name of George Droutsas, who is apparently the branch's Communications Director, who would pass my query on.

Thinking this odd, I sent Mr Droutsas an email as suggested with a couple of questions for him also, below is a link to a copy of my email.

[Email re Asmar and Kitchings Email address](#)

As yet I have still to receive any form of response at all from George Droutsas who clearly excels in his communications role, or the Branch Secretary Diana Asmar.



Diana Asmar - No response

I have however heard from Kimberly Kitching , in fact she rang me quite promptly.

Unfortunately our conversation was cut short as I had somewhere else to be, and alas repeated attempts from both sides to continue the conversation have not succeeded.

Kitching had some interesting observations and some good points but I left the conversation unconvinced.

One of the points that Kitching made is that Flynn lacked the ability to perform her role as she did not have the financial expertise and was insistent that the branch sought to have her trained.

Actually the rules put in place by the Federal Court Administrator include on the job training for all positions, so there is no reason why Flynn could not have trained whilst performing the duties she claims to have been stopped from doing.

In fact in her role as Assistant Secretary/Treasurer Flynn is supposed to sign every cheque that the union issues, these are the union rules that were set by a Federal Court appointed administrator. Flynn is not even a signatory on the union cheque account, and cannot even say if a cheque has ever been issued by the branch. This would appear to be denying the members their choice and ignoring the result of a democratic election.

One area that astounded me in the allegations regarding the reported bullying and

intimidation of Leonie Flynn is the alleged use of tracking devices that were reportedly used on Flynn's union vehicle. When I queried Kitching on these allegations she said that she could not speak to Flynn's state of mind, which I thought was odd given that was not my query.

Kitching explained it away as paranoia, however I have heard these reports from a number of sources who claim to be aware of Flynn being tracked by her vehicle and her mobile phone and seen the tracking devices first-hand.

Kitching explained to me that she thought the whole thing was a part of an organised strategy By Marco Bolano and Kathy Jackson to assist Bolano in his campaign to regain control of the union at the next election.

As evidence of this she points to both Flynn and Bolano both being on compensation, and talk of Bolano and Flynn being ex-partners, something I hear conflicting statements on.

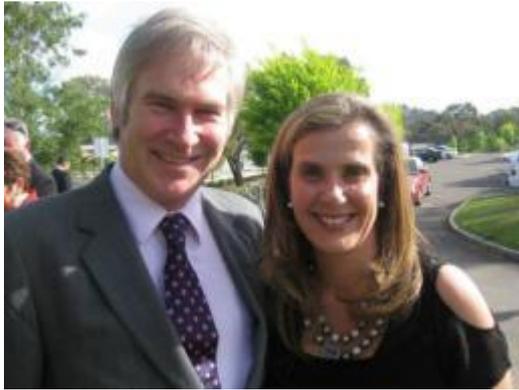
The fact is that Flynn was a part of Bolano's ticket, that much is for sure, however from my enquiries Flynn picked up votes not from Bolano supporters, but because she was extremely well-respected by members in the field.

There is one part of the conversation with Kitching, who I have to say was most co-operative, that I did find incredibly intriguing. Something that can be seen as either a huge co-incidence or further evidence to support the theory of Kathy Jacksons involvement.

The current investigation by Fair Work Commission into the matters raised by Flynn is being headed up by Chris Enright.

Chris Enright is Director of Regulatory Compliance Branch at FWC and was formerly General Manager of the Australian Crime Commission [gaining himself notoriety for the Bob Debus File.](#)

However it is not Bob Debus or his file that is of concern, it is Enright's relationship with John Lawler CEO of Australian Crime Commission and brother of Kathy Jacksons partner Michael Lawler.



Lawler and Jackson

I sent a short email to Mr Enright to ask if he saw any conflict of interest in his involvement.

Dear Mr Enright,

Given your former position at the Australian Crime Commission and your working relationship with the CEO John Lawler whilst there, I was wondering if you feel it is appropriate that you are in any way involved in a HSU matter, or whether you see a conflict.

John Lawler as I expect you are aware is the brother of Michael Lawler one of Fair Work Commissions Vice Presidents and partner of Kathy Jackson National Secretary of the HSU. Kathy Jackson is one of those who may gain considerably from your organisations findings and rulings.

Given you have connections with two members of the Lawler family I wondered if you saw that as an issue.

I hope this is something you have considered, and if not I hope that you will consider removing yourself from any HSU related matter so as the public can be assured of a non biased investigation.

If you could let me know your position on this given the current investigation into HSU Number 1 Branch it would be greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards

Peter Wicks

As yet there has been no response.

Kitching also points towards the unreliability of some of the documents attached to Flynn's statement which I have not seen or received so cannot comment on. It should be noted however that they are referred to throughout Flynn's statement and serve to back up many of her allegations, so without these we only have Flynn's word to rely on.

Kitching also told me that there was to be a written response to Flynn's allegations coming soon, and we will await that with anticipation.

Leonie Flynn has not been available for comment as I understand it she is suffering from extreme stress.

Whilst looking into this I am also being told by members that there is a \$15 Million fund that is to be split between number 1 and number 3 Branch for the purpose of reclassifications. Members are querying what is happening with the money and some have allegedly been told by Diana Asmar that they are going to use the money for another purpose, although has yet to enlighten members on just what that purpose is.

Many also claim that during the campaign new members were told they would be given \$2,000 if Asmar secured the role of Secretary, they are wondering what happened to the money they were allegedly promised.

For what it is worth I am reserving my judgement on the matter until I am in receipt of all of the details and see the response that has been promised by Kimberly Kitching and await the outcome of any FWC investigation.

However one thing I am sure of is this, the real losers in this mess are the members, once again.

I know that the members are sick to death of the fighting between the factions over the running of this branch of the HSU.

Members are well and truly over seeing the amount of time, effort, and their funds wasted on the fighting, bickering, accusations and scheming from these two factions and it is about time it stopped.

Whether it is Asmar or Bolano running the union, one thing is clear, this type of carry on will continue on regardless and keep destroying the reputation of the union movement and break the spirit of its members.

There is perhaps one solution that may solve the issue once and for all and it is one that won't be popular with either side.

I would look seriously at dissolving and shutting down the number 1 branch and then absorbing the members into branches 2, 3 and 4, as they seem to be chugging along quite nicely without the factionalism.

The long-suffering members of Number 1 Branch deserve the chance to have a union that is finally focused on them and their rights and conditions at work.

After all, isn't that what the union movement is supposed to be about?

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