

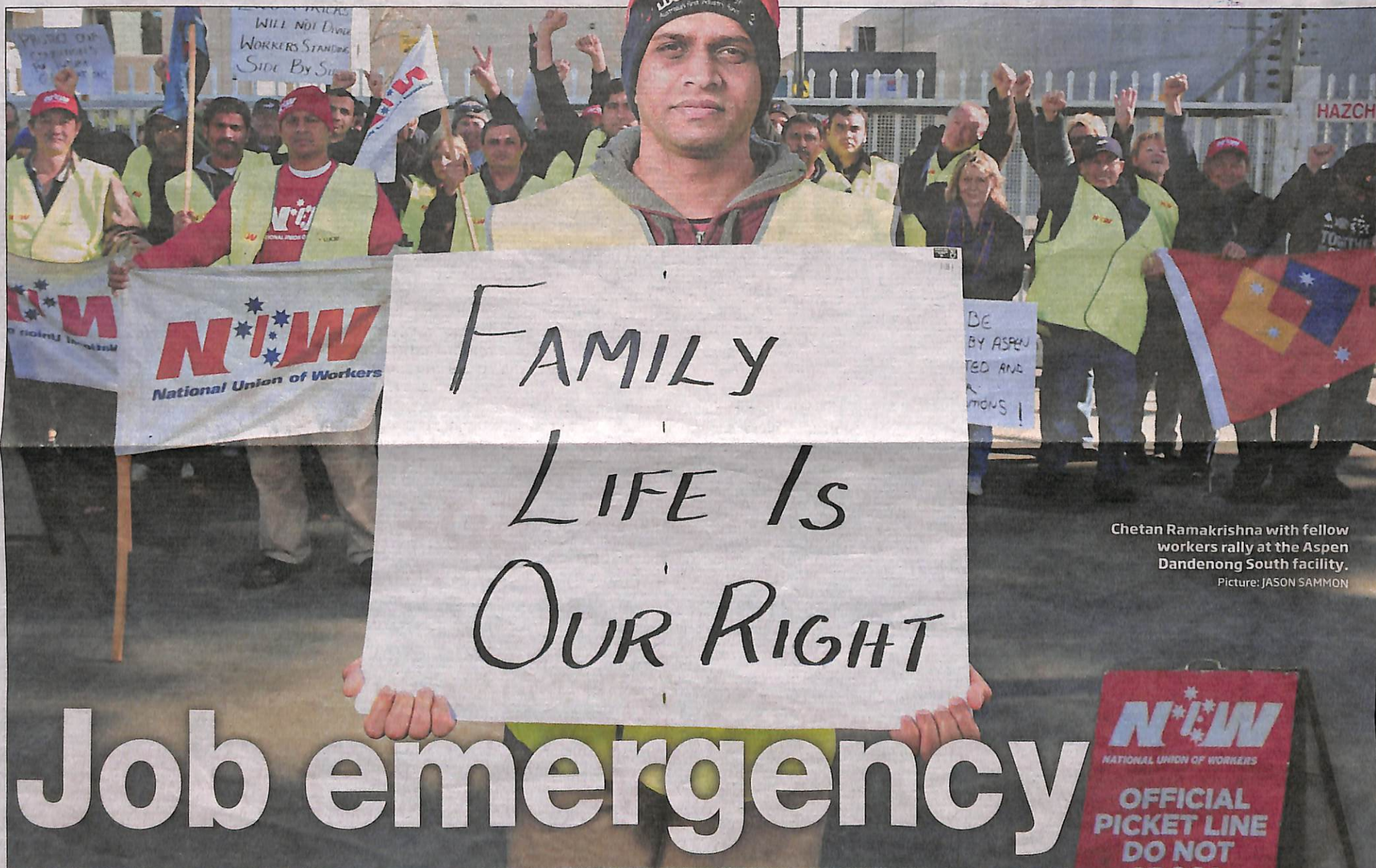
3 SCHOOL CAMPAIGN
BUILDS MOMENTUM

9 COUNCIL GETS
ANOTHER C-PLUS

11 TRUCKS TAKEN
OFF THE ROAD

Dandenong Leader

8
MEET THE
NEW KIDS
IN TOWN



Chetan Ramakrishna with fellow workers rally at the Aspen Dandenong South facility.
Picture: JASON SAMMON

NISSAN WORKERS LAID OFF AS UNEMPLOYMENT SOARS

Geordie Cowan

FORTY-TWO employees at Dandenong South's Nissan parts warehouse have become the latest casualties of Greater Dandenong's shrinking jobs market.

And at neighbouring manufacturer Aspen Pharmaceuticals, about 170 workers are striking to protect conditions, even while their jobs are under threat of being shipped offshore.

The cuts and action come as Greater Dandenong's unemployment rate hits a record

high of 12 per cent, against the state average of 6.6 per cent.

Nissan workers told the *Leader* they were shocked their jobs had been made redundant after the company decided to outsource distribution and warehousing to Ceva Logistics from August.

Warehouse employee Judi Blackwell said she was "devastated" by the news.

"We do everything they ask of us and, in return, they come in and make us redundant," she said. "There are no jobs in the southeast unless it's casual."

Nissan corporate communications general

manager Peter Fadeyev said the closure was a financial decision and the company had "no plans for redeployment" for the axed workers.

Mr Fadeyev said the decision had "absolutely no impact" on Nissan's nearby manufacturing facility in Dandenong South as it was a "separate business altogether".

Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union assistant national vehicles secretary Warren Butler said the sackings would cause "hardship to families in the high unemployment area of southeast".

"This is a deeply disappointing

move from a company which has a national profile, a move which will affect our members and their families," Mr Butler said.

South East Melbourne Manufacturers Alliance chief executive Adrian Boden said more than 4000 southeast manufacturing jobs had disappeared since 2008.

Greater Dandenong Council's business group manager Paul Kearsley said the level of unemployment in Greater Dandenong was extremely concerning "from both a social and economic viewpoint".

Mr Kearsley said the council wanted to see a greater focus on job creation policies by federal and state governments, support for companies in the auto industry and more funding for TAFE programs, among other things.

Ceva communications general manager David Cliffe said the company, which has "several operations in the Dandenong area", would recruit more people as a result of the Nissan contract.

Ups and downs of jobs, Page 5