



# QUEENSLAND BRANCH NEWS

NEWSLETTER of the QLD Branch of the MARITIME UNION of AUSTRALIA

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## Hutchison's statement raises more questions than answers

ON SUNDAY 9 AUGUST Hutchison Ports Australia finally put out a statement following their clandestine decision to sack 97 of its 224 workers in Sydney and Brisbane by text and email - effective immediately - at midnight last Thursday night, 6 August.

Maritime Union of Australia National Secretary Paddy Crumlin said it was a Clayton's Press Release - one that you put out when you don't want to say anything.

Mr Crumlin said the statement from the company didn't fit with reality and called on the company to release all labour data and modelling to determine the true nature and scope of any problem.

"Sacking workers by text and email - effective immediately - is not the Australian way. The MUA utterly rejects the suggestion that the company is reducing its Australian operations due to a lack of competitiveness," Mr Crumlin said.

"Hutchison has been actively subcontracting its existing work out to other stevedores and no-one except the company knows why. Any business Hutchison has lost recently has been of its own choosing.

"The MUA believes this is a strategy to increase automation as there are no logical reasons why the company would otherwise give away profitable contracts.

"The union is seeking a fair and objective process where all labour data and modelling are put on the table to determine the true nature and scope of the problem.

"Employment Minister Eric Abetz has let the company off the hook and we expect this matter to be raised this week in federal parliament. Unemployment is rising and the Abbott Government's continuing failure to stand up for Australian jobs is grating with the public."

The matter will be heard by the Fair Work Commission at 5pm on Monday August 10.

### Join the community assemblies! Show solidarity!

Brisbane: Curlew Street, Berth 11 Fisherman Island.

Sydney: Gate B150 Sirius Rd, Port Botany (access via Foreshore Rd)

The assemblies will run 24/7, so come any time. Support will be especially vital at night and in the early mornings.

### Section 739 and section 418

THERE ARE TWO CASES before the Fair Work Commission. The union has brought a case under section 739 of the Fair Work Act about Hutchison's procedure in relation to what the EBA says about redundancies. That will be heard by the FWC on Monday 10 August, and we may have a result by Tuesday 11 August.

It's possible that the result may include a recommendation for reinstatement pending consultation. But it may not. And if it does, Hutchison may stall. And if they reinstate temporarily, it may be only to renew the redundancies after a sham consultation. The FWC case will help us only if we stay strong, vigilant and united.

Hutchison has brought a case under section 418, which mandates the FWC to issue orders to stop "unprotected industrial action".

The damaging "industrial action" has been by Hutchison, who have turned customers away and sacked half the workforce. We are insisting on our rights to work on safe and viable terms, with our workmates, and by agreement; and we are backing up our principles with a community assembly at the terminal gates to show support.

### This is the Hutchison statement

HPA PARTICIPATED in extensive conciliation at the Fair Work Commission before Deputy President Anna Booth on Friday evening (August 7).

The result of this conciliation was that at 8.30pm Her Honour, Deputy President Booth,

issued interim Orders directing the employees of HPA to cease all forms of industrial action.

HPA immediately advised of these Orders and had expected that the Maritime Union of Australia would facilitate the orderly return to work and continuation of work at terminals in Sydney and Brisbane.

On June 26, 2015, Hutchison Ports Australia (HPA) announced that it would be reducing the size of its workforce in Sydney and Brisbane.

After a consultation process, this redundancy program has now commenced. Unfortunately, it will result in 97 job losses between Sydney and Brisbane.

This has been a difficult decision and follows our announcement six weeks ago that the company is downsizing its service offering to the market.

HPA is currently incurring substantial financial losses. It has been unable to secure market share with leading shipping lines already committed to the existing operators under long-term contracts.

HPA has previously made it clear - and would like to reiterate - that it has no capital expenditure plans for new automation at the Sydney or Brisbane terminals in an industry troubled by excess capacity and low growth rates.

In particular, it is not true that HPA intends to introduce driverless quay cranes or autostrads in the foreseeable future.

## More questions than answers

THE HUTCHISON STATEMENT raises more questions than it answers. If they are making losses, then they will make bigger losses after giving away their customers. They can't be planning to run the terminals at a bigger loss indefinitely.

"Foreseeable future" is a slippery term, especially from Hutchison who apparently couldn't "foresee" enough who they would put out of a job on 7 August in time to talk to them face to face beforehand. And who think their "our way or no way" announcement of redundancy plans was a "consultation process".

If Hutchison really plan no automation, then things are worse, not better. That would mean they plan to compete with DP World and Patricks, not by better equipment, but just by ramming down labour costs.

## Follow and promote the campaign on social media

UP TO THE MINUTE reports and pictures on the "Hutchison Ports - Stop Union Busting" Facebook page, on [fb.me/1PajABU](https://www.facebook.com/1PajABU)

## Why we need committees

JEFF LANGDON, who was Queensland MUA branch organiser from 1994 to 1999, came to the community assembly on 9 August to show support.

Speaking to the assembly, he argued that we need to set up committees for the dispute. Not just one committee, but committees - a women's committee, a publicity committee, a committee to deal with contact with other unions...

Where did he get that idea from? Jeff told the MUA Branch News that he learned it from the rank and file in the 1998 Patricks dispute. "It didn't come from the officials. It came from the rank and file.

"Committees keep people interested. They can know they're playing a part. They allow energy and abilities to come forward which rest hidden in normal times".

## Support from deputy premier

JACKIE TRAD, deputy premier of Queensland, came to the community assembly on 9 August to show support, and spoke passionately in defence of the MUA, so did Don Brown, former secretary of the Miscellaneous Workers' Union and Queensland state president of the Labor Party.

## What United Voice won

CAROL CORLESS, president of United Voice and union delegate at Graincorp Foods margarine factory, came to our community assembly on 9 August.

"I'm here to support the Hutchison workers. I know about redundancies because I work at a site which has been told we're closing.

"Unlike these workers, we were told by management face to face and with good notice, in early 2014, so we've spent nearly 18 months in discussions. It will be two years by the time the site shuts in early 2016.

"We've argued successfully for people to get training and advice, or redeployment if they want it. Our EBA entitles us to three months' notice of the precise closure date, and to redundancy payments equal to eight weeks' wages upfront plus another four weeks' for every year of service, uncapped".

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