



QUEENSLAND BRANCH NEWS

NEWSLETTER of the QLD Branch of the MARITIME UNION of AUSTRALIA

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Sacked by email at 11:30pm: Hutchison workers respond with sit-ins and community assemblies. MUA, here to stay!

AT THE HUTCHISON terminals in Brisbane and in Sydney, workers on shift are "sitting in", and other workers are joining community assemblies at the terminal gates.

Their demand is that Hutchison withdraws the redundancies it declared on Thursday 6 August and negotiates with the union over re-equipment and staffing at the terminals.

Workers from other port operators, seafarers, members of the CFMEU construction union and the Electrical Trades Unions, students, family members, and other supporters joined the Hutchison workers.

It could be a long battle. We need to be organised and prepared to maintain the community assemblies at the terminal gates for a good while. But we can win this one. Hutchison have invested around \$700 million to enter the Australian waterfront. They have long leases on their terminals in Brisbane and Sydney. They can't afford to walk away, and they will find they can't do anything by trying to bulldoze the workforce.

Sacked by email at 11:30pm the day before

At 11:30pm on Thursday night 6 August Hutchison sacked half their Australian port workforce - 41 out of 84 in Brisbane, 53 out of 110 in Sydney - by email. The workers were given a week's notice, but told not to come to work for that week.

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

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.

What are Hutchison planning?

WHAT HUTCHISON ARE DOING makes sense only if their plan is to use a partial shutdown to break the union and re-equip the terminals in order to restart on a low-cost basis.

They have given away customers to DP World, deliberating running down their operation for a while. They replaced their local managers five months ago, and plans now are coming straight from their head office in Hong Kong.

They started up here only in 2012. Now they have linked up for a new plan with Filipino-based operator ICTSI, which is building a new terminal in Melbourne to open in December 2016.

"We stood by our comrades, and the managers backed down"

EIGHT WORKERS went in for their shift at the Hutchison terminal in Brisbane on Friday 7 August, but refused on principle to cooperate with the management.

They told the Queensland MUA Branch News: "We were supporting our comrades who had received emails terminating their jobs. The managers asked us if we were going to work, and we said no, because we had no union representation or negotiation.

"We stood for our rights and for our comrades. We knew we could be sacked for it, but we didn't care.

"The manager was obviously reading out instructions he'd received from higher up, and when we took a strong stand he wasn't confident.

"A week ago Hutchison said there could be redundancies, but they said they would talk with us about it. Then people got emails at 11:30pm telling them their employment would end in a week's time, and they wouldn't be required at work for that week. We're not standing for that".

DP World workers plan action to win on EBA issues

An MUA delegate from DP World at the assembly outside the Hutchison terminal in Brisbane told Queensland Branch MUA News: "I'm here to support fellow workers at Hutchison.

"DP World workers are concerned about what happened last night [6 August] at Hutchison. We've already taken a hit at DP world, with our numbers reduced with automation, and now we see Hutchison trying to undercut us by cutting jobs and conditions.

"At DP World we now believe we have exhausted the EBA negotiation process, to the point that we have no choice but to look at protected industrial action. We're doing the ballot this afternoon [7 August].

"Initially the action will have minimal impact on customers, and we hope even at this stage DP World may have some common sense and look at the three issues outstanding. They are:

"1. Shift cancellations - when shifts are cancelled on Thursdays, they want to be able to move them to Friday night.

"2. We're claiming a self-funded increase in payment for straddle operation. DP World have agreed it for some workers; we say it should apply to all.

"3. There's an issue about shift premiums in Week 7 rosters.

"We've offset the costs of what we're asking through new working arrangements on the cranes, so DP World have no good reason not to agree".

The richest man in Asia

LI KA-SHING, chair of the board of Hutchison Whampoa, is the richest man in Asia, with wealth totalling \$43 billion.

"I can't think of anything more disrespectful"

TERRI BUTLER, federal Labor MP for Griffith, came to the assembly in Brisbane to give support on Friday 7 August.

"That in Australia", she said, "people who are checking their messages for their next day's work can instead be told to check their email and read that they've been sacked... I can't think of anything more disrespectful..."

"When it comes to workplace relations, it's the Federal Government that sets the one, and this government just doesn't care about working people".

See Terri's speech online at bit.ly/terri-b.

John Martin also came to the assembly on 7 August to bring support from the Queensland Council of Unions.

In Tory Britain

IN TORY Britain, where David Cameron is trying to finish Thatcher's drive to smash workers' rights, bosses are still legally required to notify the government Redundancy Payments Service and the union 30 days before the first redundancy, or 45 days before if it's over 100 made redundant.

They then have to spend 30 (or 45: until 2013 it used to be 90) days in consultation with workers, giving them written information in advance.

After the consultations, workers made redundant must be given at least a week's notice for every year of employment, up to 12 weeks.

Large parts of this procedure are not within the power of the Tories to change, because they are European Union law.

Why don't we have the same or better protections in Australia, which is supposed to be the land of the fair go, and where we had a Labor government from 2007 to 2013?

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