

Hutchison worker: “The union delivered the job cuts the company wanted”

18 November 2015

One sacked Hutchison worker who attended the Brisbane mass meeting on Monday spoke with the *World Socialist Web Site*. He said that although there was “almost unanimous” vote for union-company deal “there were a lot of concerns about the end results.

“With the higher redundancy payouts, the company got enough of us to leave to get the numbers it wanted. I’m one of them. I got \$38,000 to walk away. We have been told that we will go into a pool for three years, so that if the company wants to employ anyone it has to take us back. We can also be called in as casuals.

“The maintenance workers may be called back once the company gets shipping contracts, but it won’t be so good for the operators, who are 80 percent of the workforce. Hutchison will probably automate, like Patrick has already done, so you are less likely to see the operators back.”

The sacked worker described how the dispute was dragged out, putting pressure on the dismissed workers to find other jobs.

“I’ve had to find another job, because I could not pay my bills on the base rate wages that the union organised with Hutchison. I was going broke. I was on the brink of bankruptcy.

“The union operates like a business. It’s not do or die, like Bob Carnegie [MUA Queensland state secretary] tells us. The union delivered the job cuts that the company wanted.

“The union got us a better redundancy package. Anyone who was with Hutchison for more than two years gets 26 weeks, or six months. For me, that was \$38,000. But now, I’m working as a casual, through a labour hire agency, with no holidays or sick leave. Where I’m working now, we have no rights. Sometimes, the electricians have to work without taking breaks. The employers want to have us all over a barrel.

“I heard that Hutchison wants to employ casuals. At Patrick, the terminal next to Hutchison, I heard of casuals who only get one or two shifts a month! How can you survive on that? A casual position is no value to anybody.

“The companies will keep driving us into the ground. Our kids will be born into a worse world. People will start to take notice. There comes a point where you just can’t cop things anymore.”



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