

Thursday, 20 January 2022

Patrick moves to cut dock wages in half

Patrick Terminals have applied to the Fair Work Commission to terminate its existing enterprise agreement, a move which would cut the pay, conditions and job security of dock workers. If the company succeeds, workers face a staggering 50 per cent wage cut.

Dock workers have been working rolling shifts, 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the pandemic, and recent data from NSW Ports showed an 18.37 per cent increase in containers put through the port in the 12 months to September 2021.

Over the last year, profit margins in the shipping industry as a whole have increased by 11 percentage points to 20.8 per cent, and Patricks have increased their Terminal Access Charges by an average of 55 per cent across their four Australian ports. At the same time Patrick workers have seen an effective wage freeze for 2 years.

Qube – which owns Patricks, has enjoyed a steady 3.3 per cent increase in revenue every year for the five years leading to 2021.

This company – which has the vocal support of the Morrison Government – is using the pandemic as cover to attempt to slash the wages and conditions of workers

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O’Neil:

“Shipping companies have ridden out the pandemic with huge profits thanks to the tireless work of Australian dock workers. Patrick Terminals is now seeking to cut wages in half for those workers.

“This is bare-faced profiteering in the midst of a pandemic and an international crisis, and the union movement stands with dock workers – and all essential workers – who deserve to be rewarded for their tireless efforts over the last two years, not punished.

“This company is trying to terminate an agreement which has created ports which are incredibly efficient and profitable while also providing safe and secure employment.

“The ACTU calls on Patricks to remove this extreme threat and work with the MUA to resolve this dispute through conciliation today. A speedy resolution of this issue is in the mutual interest of Patricks and its workers, as well as Australians that rely on our ports.

“Instead of trying to shift blame for its failure to protect Australians and our supply chains the Morrison Government should be condemning any company attempting to cut wages and harm essential workers during the pandemic.”

Media contact: Peter Green 0400 764 200