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Svitzer refuses to put down weapons as union offers ceasefire

Svitzer, the tugboat operator currently threatening to lock out workers around the country and shut down significant portions of the Australian economy rather than grant workers a pay rise, has refused to back down at hearings convened by the Fair Work Commission today. The company is continuing with threats of mass economic disruption despite offers from the unions involved in the dispute to find a way to end the bargaining stalemate.

The company has refused to grant pay rises for four years, and is now threatening to lock workers out and attempt to starve them into submission, while holding the entire Australian economy to ransom.

The actions of this company, which engaged in profiteering during the pandemic which drove up prices across the country, show why the reforms of the Secure Work, Better Pay Bill are so essential. Svitzer and other big businesses like Qantas have worked out how to game a workplace relations system which is badly out of date and in need of modernisation.

Quotes attributable to ACTU Secretary Sally McManus:

“This company is threatening the entire economy just to get their own way. It is a disgraceful abuse of power.

“Unions have offered a way forward involving stopping all industrial action, but the company is abusing their monopoly power and our broken laws by threatening damage to our country’s economy.

“This is exactly what Qantas did when they grounded their fleet after their pilots wore red ties to work. Employers like Qantas and Svitzer game the system because they can.

“The longer it takes for our workplace laws to change the more employers will rush to use and abuse the loopholes to the detriment of all Australians, and the longer wages will go backwards”

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