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Media release

Wednesday, April 27, 2011

Industrial action at Patrick terminals

Stevedoring company Patrick has received notification of a 24-hour strike over pay negotiations at its four Australian terminals beginning on Saturday, April 30.

The stoppage by Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) workers will affect terminals in Brisbane, Port Botany in Sydney and East Swanson in Melbourne on Saturday April 30, while workers at the Fremantle terminal in Western Australia will strike on Monday, May 3.

Patrick Divisional Director Paul Garaty said he was disappointed the MUA had decided to strike, despite negotiations continuing before the Fair Work Australia Commission.

"We are committed to working through the process established by Fair Work Australia," he said.

"The MUA had received permission for protected strike action, but had given an undertaking that it would not commence any action while the parties were still negotiating.

"This strike is designed to hurt us, but the real impact will be felt by the hundreds of exporters and importers relying on prompt shipping service, from small businesses waiting for deliveries to cotton farmers trying to get their recent harvest to international markets.

Mr Garaty said Patrick had offered pay increases between 4 and 4.5 percent in exchange for specified productivity improvements.

"Unfortunately the union has refused to modify its claim, which would add more than 30 per cent - almost \$120 million - to our cost base during the next three years," he said.

"We have argued before Fair Work Australia that the MUA's demands are excessive, amounting to a 32 per cent increase in total salary costs.

"We would have to recover those costs from our customers, who would pass them on in higher prices to consumers.

"Patrick is committed to achieving a fair outcome but we cannot negotiate while the claims are excessive and unsustainable."



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Union demands include:

- 6 per cent wage increase each year of the three year agreement
- Increase in superannuation from 9 per cent superannuation to 13 per cent
- 1 per cent income protection
- Six weeks annual leave
- Long-service leave increased to 13 weeks after 10 years.
- Elimination of G2 classification with all G2s increased in pay to G3 and other reclassifications
- Extra worker for each shift as safety facilitator
- Eight-man minimum per gang
- Payout of sick leave at salary rate in circumstances of redundancy rather than graded.

Total cost:

- Year one: \$36 million
- Year two: \$36 million
- Year three: \$45 million

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