

MEDIA RELEASE

Tablelands Regional Council - Employees Should NOT Be Caught In Wage Freeze!

30 APRIL 2015

Employees at Tablelands Regional Council recently voted NO to Council's proposed Certified Agreement which sought to reduce workers conditions of employment.

However, they could be caught in a wage freeze if Council Management does not grant an interim pay rise sought by The Services Union.

Since the change of Government in January of this year, members of the Union requested Council to stop wasting rate payers money by expending resources in negotiating an Agreement under substandard legislation that the new Government had committed to repealing.

Minister for Industrial Relations Curtis Pitt announced last week that the Queensland Government would indeed repeal these draconian laws enforced on local government workers by the former Newman government.

Instead, unlike many other Councils which ceased bargaining and have paid a decent interim wage increase to employees, Tablelands Regional Council sought to plough rate payers money into negotiations that would reduce workers' conditions if successful.

Secretary of The Services Union Neil Henderson said these negotiations have always been about the retention of working conditions and the rejection of the establishment of a two-tiered wage system which would have seen new employees paid less.

"To be totally clear, these negotiations have never been about big pay increases," Mr Henderson said.

"Our members were never comfortable with the manner in which their conditions were removed and they were definitely not happy about the attacks on their job security."

"These negotiations have also been about the ability for Council employees to ensure future negotiations are on a fair and level playing field," Mr Henderson said.

The Services Union wrote to Mayor Rosa Lee Long, Tablelands Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ian Church and Councillors about ceasing negotiations for a period of twelve months to allow for changes to the Industrial Relations Act to be finalised before resuming negotiations under a legislative framework that does not disadvantage employees.

"This request, as well as that of a low overdue interim pay increase for hard working Council employees, was rejected," Mr Henderson said.

"This is extremely disappointing. It would appear Council management are intent on punishing their employees by freezing their overdue wages."

Employees should not pay the price for Council Management's incompetence in not having resolved this matter earlier this year upon the change of government and taken the prudent action then of applying a decent wage increase and rolling over the existing Agreement," Mr Henderson said.

"Our Union will continue to advocate for an interim pay increase on behalf of employees who provide essential services to their local community."

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