

23 AUGUST 2018

MEDIA RELEASE

Brisbane City Council - Exploitation, Wage Theft and Discrimination!

Brisbane City Council (BCC) is involved in the systematic and brazen exploitation of Indian IT workers, including wage theft, The Services Union has uncovered.

It also seems BCC is involved in discriminating against the employment of Australian workers.

BCC outsourced its IT functions to Indian Company HCL in 2013 which was always going to lead to disaster, the Union said.

The move cost 55 jobs with the Council claiming at the time it would result in savings of \$8 million over five years.

It has now emerged that the Indian workers brought to Australia by HCL have been working extraordinary hours, often 60 per week on rotating 12 hour shifts with no weekend or public holiday rates or overtime.

The Services Union Secretary Neil Henderson said these workers have worked thousands of additional unpaid hours.

"Every aspect of HCL's operations for the BCC has been based on the exploitation of these employees who have been held over a barrel due their reliance on special visas," Mr Henderson said.

"From our investigation, these employees have been threatened to be deported and replaced by other Indian workers keen enough to get to Australia to accept the low pay and long hours."

"These workers have been short changed on a significant number of entitlements such as additional leave for shift work, annual leave loading and entitlements due to them under the Company's own policies for transport and communications," Mr Henderson said.

Employees were expected to attend training courses in their own time and to be on call on their days off without payment.

Meals were also taken on the job with no set breaks.

W theservicesunion.com.au

P 07 3844 5300

F 07 3846 5046

AUSTRALIAN MUNICIPAL,
ADMINISTRATIVE, CLERICAL
AND SERVICES UNION QUEENSLAND
(SERVICES
AND NORTHERN ADMINISTRATIVE)
BRANCH
ABN 86 351 665 653

TRADING AS
THE SERVICES UNION

BRANCH SECRETARY:
Neil Henderson
EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT:
Jennifer Thomas

... ENDS

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:
Media Officer Belinda Hogan-Collis on 0401 710 039

"Material I have examined makes it extremely clear that HCL management have always known exactly what was going on and took the view that Indian employees would put up with these conditions in order to get to Australia," Mr Henderson said.

"HCL also has the view that it's better for it to have the work done by Indian workers rather than Australians."

"We understand that HCL favours the employment of Indian nationals over Australian workers, because Indian nations will work the longer hours at lower pay levels."

"But our members have also observed that Australian workers working alongside them were working 40 hour week arrangements when they were being rostered on minimum shift arrangements of 48 hours per week."

"In circumstances where work in a particular area that was previously done by 14 employees has now been taken over by five HCL employees we say that BCC knew that corners were being cut when the contract commenced in 2013 and this was the reason for the savings." , " Mr Henderson said.

"In Local Government, we have never witnessed such blatant wage theft, exploitation and discrimination in a workforce including breaches of the National Employment Standards and the Award."

"It is disgraceful that it is Australian's largest Council that seems to be complicit in this," Mr Henderson said.

The Services Union is seeking meetings with the Company and the Council and has not ruled out taking action in relation to all of these issues.