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MEDIA RELEASE

Hinchinbrook Shire Council Locks Out Employees

28 APRIL 2021

Members of The Services Union working at Hinchinbrook Shire Council (HSC) are considering taking Protected Industrial Action (PIA) on Thursday, 29 April 2021 in the form of a thirty minute strike.

In a move which clearly demonstrates what little regard the Council has for its community and its workforce, Hinchinbrook Council has responded by directing a full day lock out of its workforce.

The Services Union has been trying to negotiate a new Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) with Council management since last August, but unfortunately has been stonewalled throughout the whole process.

Management has been very difficult to bargain with and has been quite childish often exhibiting complete ignorance of their obligations under the Industrial Relations Act.

Secretary of The Services Union, Neil Henderson said employees have been left with no choice but to consider stopping work.

"This Council has bats in its belfry. A full day lockout is not a reasonable response to Council employees who have not had a pay increase since July 2019," Mr. Henderson said.

"In the time since then, our members have been bending over backwards to continue to deliver frontline services to their local community, but they have been expected to do their work as well as filling in these servicing gaps caused by a number of redundancies."

"On top of all this, some members have been knocked back accessing their leave entitlements which just shows a total lack of respect for the workforce and a lack of forward planning on staffing numbers," Mr. Henderson said.

"Employees have also had to dispute attempts by the Council management to pressure them to sign amended contracts of employment without any consultation. It's been the wild west in Hinchinbrook."

Council staff met at lunch today to discuss their strike action and EBA. "The offer on the table of 1.5 per cent each year with no back pay is just not good enough, particularly for a Council which pays at the lower end of the market.

This Council needs to start properly valuing its staff." Mr. Henderson said.

"Time for this Council to stop being so batty and pay its workforce a decent pay rise. That money will flow straight into the local community and businesses and give everyone an economic job in the arm" Mr. Henderson said.

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