

FULL SHIFT STRIKE CALLED FOR CHINESE NEW YEAR FROM WEDNESDAY 8PM TO THURSDAY 8PM

Joint SkyCity newsletter of SEA-Unite and the Service and Food Workers Union
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Dear friends,

A joint stop work meeting of SEA-Unite and the SFWU has voted by a 99% majority to call a strike for a full shift of all union members from 8pm Wednesday to 8pm Thursday.

This is to reaffirm that the current offer is unacceptable. It also is a necessary response to the escalation of anti-worker pressure from the company. This has included:

- Locking out Table Games staff for the remainder of a shift if they take industrial action
- Cutting shifts or refusing overtime to some staff if they take industrial action – in effect victimizing union members for exercising a legal democratic right
- Attempting to trespass union officials from carrying out their duties
- Asking IEA staff who joined the union after January 1 to repay the pay increase they received and telling them it will be cancelled going forward

We believe all of the above actions are illegal and will be looking to take action in the courts to stop them. But we can't rely on the courts – we have to show the company we remain strong and determined. The full shift strike is one way to do that.

The company has also been lying to staff in their letters. The facts are:

COMPANY REFUSES TO NEGOTIATE AND WORDING CHANGE TO COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

- They claimed we were unwilling to make counter offers or discuss Table Games issues specifically the last negotiation session. From the beginning of the negotiations the company has refused to discuss a single word change to the collective agreement. They say that outside their wage offer they want us to “roll over” the current agreement unchanged. That means we cannot discuss redundancy, part time workers, restructuring, or Schedule D which relates specifically to Table Games. That means that the only issues that could be discussed

would be operational ones. However those issues don't actually belong at the negotiations over the Collective Agreement and are better dealt with at joint management union delegates' forums. Unfortunately the company stopped having these meetings in Table Games 18 months ago.

MIKE TREEN DID NOT ACCEPT COMPANY DEMANDS BEFORE TRESPASS ORDER AGAINST HIM WAS LIFTED

- The company letter claimed that the illegal trespass order against Mike Treen was withdrawn because he gave the company the assurances they demanded. This is untrue. Mike wrote a series of assurances that were in line with the law when accessing a premise under the Employment Relations Act which require that officials exercise those right in a reasonable manner. The company said that this was not acceptable and insisted that Mike also promise never to picket on SkyCity premises. Mike refused as that has nothing to do with access but concerns his and the union's right to protest publicly. Mike explained that he would never give up those rights of a citizen. The company said they would have Mike arrested if he entered and called the police when he did so. When they arrived the Police said they were not going to arrest Mike. After that it was the company that backed down and accepted the same assurances offered previously. The trespass against another Unite officials remains in place and will be challenged legally and directly as needed.

LOCKOUT OF TABLE GAMES STAFF NOT FOR GENUINE REASONS THEREFORE NOT LEGAL

- The latest company letter claims that Table Games staff taking short strike action are being sent home for the remainder of the shift to minimize disruption to the company. That may be true but that is not a legal basis for what is in effect a "lockout". The notices given striking staff do include a claim from the company that is legal in terms of their right to "lock out" workers in law. That demand is to try to force members to accept the contract offer they are making. But the unions don't believe that is the real reason. Small groups of workers can't "accept" the company offer – only the whole union can. That is why lockouts are usually directed at all union members when employers use them. We believe that the real reason for the so-called lockouts is to intimidate staff from exercising their legal rights. In some ways the company letter to all staff actually confirms their real intentions since they don't claim that the lockouts are to force acceptance of the offered contract but simply an attempt to stop people taking action to minimize the effects on staff and customers. We are taking legal action to challenge these so-called "lockout" notices.

LETTERS TO STAFF PREVIOUSLY ON IEA'S THAT JOINED THE UNIONS AFTER JANUARY 1 CANCELLING THEIR PAY RISE TO BE CHALLENGED

Around 60 staff joined the union after January 1st. That means they were on IEA's when the 3% pay increase was given to them. It is our view that this can't be taken off people just because they have joined the union. Anyone being given a letter asking them to agree to pay back the increase they have received should refuse. The company tried this during the last negotiation and backed down when challenged at that time. We don't believe there is a legal basis to demand a reduction of contract that the company has offered and started paying to IEA staff – whether or not they signed the IEA offer. It was the company decision to impose the IEA offer whether staff had signed or not and they shouldn't be able to simply cancel it later. It now forms part of the contract between the company and you and can't be changed by one side unilaterally.

The company is showing signs of desperation. They were counting on people quitting the unions by their threats to not back pay any increase, starting paying the IEA's from January 1 and the other bullying tactics. Instead we are getting stronger.

A STRONG UNITED DISPLAY OF STRENGTH AND UNITY OF ALL MEMBERS THROUGH THE FULL SHIFT STRIKE OVER CHINESE NEW YEAR WILL SEND THEM A MESSAGE THAT THEY NEED TO ENTER SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS OVER ALL THE MATTERS IN DISPUTE IF THEY ARE SERIOUS ABOUT REACHING A SETTLEMENT THAT IS ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. THE DAYS OF 'TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT' NEGOTIATIONS ARE OVER.



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