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For Immediate Release

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**The illegal picket at VICT Webb Dock terminal must be cleared...NOW!**

MUA members are laying low, while CFMEU and other unions use social media to fuel the picket and hide under cowardly “community protest” cover to destroy Australian businesses and jobs – so what’s new?

The Victorian Supreme Court was satisfied enough of the MUA’s role that they granted a seven day injunction against MUA members from being within 100m of the VICT access gate, though there was insufficient evidence to include the CFMEU.

It seems that this has been ignored, union stooges and bullies are still blocking access to the terminal and picnicking at the gate. But these are now faceless individuals hiding behind hoodies for fear of identification.

This is not a community protest; the community would be supporting our farmers whose livelihoods are being shattered as their hard-earned produce rots on the dock because of cowardly, irresponsible union activists and sympathisers, illegally blocking access to a business. The community is the Victorian people who are being denied access to their Christmas imports.

But worse still, there is absolutely no justification for any protest action in the first place.

It is a condition of employment of VICT that workers in the maritime security zone must be eligible for a Maritime Security Identity Card (MSIC).

According to sources, the MUA member who is at the centre of this debacle knowingly withheld the fact that he was not eligible for a MSIC when he applied for employment. He knew it was a condition of employment and he knew that he was not eligible because he had previously appealed a decision to deny him an MSIC and had his appeal dismissed.

Let’s be clear, to be refused an MSIC or to have your MSIC withdrawn, you are likely to have been convicted to imprisonment for a maritime-security-relevant offence, and these offences are not minor.

If there was a case of wrongful dismissal, then there would be a case before the Fair Work Commission, but there is no case and there is no claim.

So why all the fuss?

One might speculate that the MUA initiated this action to attack and damage VICT and its parent company ICTSI because the workplace EBA was negotiated with the AMOU and the MUA has no negotiating power in this workplace.

And perhaps it is not just a coincidence that the PNG Maritime and Transport Workers' Union has been striking against the same parent company (ICTSI) who has recently won a contract to operate a terminal there? More likely this is a coordinated international campaign designed to hurt ICTSI. It is no secret that our very own MUA National Secretary, Paddy Crumlin is also the President of the ITF (International Transport Workers Federation).

What has happened to law and order in Victoria?

While it seems that there are no identifiable MUA members breaking the court injunction by being within 100 metres of the access road, other individuals are breaking the law simply by blocking access to a business or private property. So where are the Victorian Police?

Shipping lines are copping the cost of extended delays, Victorian consumers will go without their Christmas imports and Australian farmers' produce is rotting on the wharf. The livelihoods of these hard-working farmers are taking a hit and their employees' jobs are in jeopardy, as Australia's reputation as a reliable supplier is being destroyed and export orders are being cancelled because union activists are bent on hurting VICT with absolutely no justification.

It's time for the Victorian Government to take action to enforce the law, remove or arrest the lawbreakers and stop the destruction of Victoria's economy and Australia's reputation as a reliable producer nation.

Right from the start this whole campaign highlights MUA's hypocrisy. This action makes a mockery of their previous arguments highlighting the importance to national security that all Australian seafarers have successfully submitted to rigorous criminal background checking. Now they have initiated illegal action to block access to VICT on the pretext of demanding that a colleague, who has clearly failed these same checks, should be reinstated to work in a maritime security zone.

This illegal blockade must be cleared now, and the perpetrators dealt with to the full extent of the law. Otherwise, cowardly hiding behind a false "community protest" cloak is likely to become the new favourite modus operandi of these destructive, anti-Australian unions.

Editor's note:

For additional information contact Rod Nairn, chief executive officer on 0449 902 457.

*Shipping Australia is a peak national shipping association comprising 30 member shipping lines and shipping agents that would be involved with over 70 per cent of Australia's container and car trade, over 60 per cent of our break bulk and bulk trades, and significant cruise ship and tug operations.*