



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, June 7, 2023

Union members vote in favour of industrial action at Sovereign Hill

Union members at Sovereign Hill have overwhelmingly voted in favour of a range of industrial actions to break a deadlock in negotiations for a new enterprise agreement.

A Protected Action Ballot which closed on Tuesday had a turnout of 83.3% of all eligible voters, with all 11 proposed industrial actions supported by at least three-quarters of those who voted.

More than 82% voted in favour of a strike of up to 24 hours.

Sovereign Hill workers will be urged to say no to an offer from management that is expected to be put to a vote tomorrow.

Nikau Irvine, Acting Director of the Entertainment, Crew and Sport section of the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance, said the results of the Protected Action Ballot were an emphatic rejection of management's offer.

"Our members could not have sent a clearer message to Sovereign Hill management that it needs to improve its offer to provide a pay rise, not a pay cut, this year," Mr Irvine said.

"The offer fails to address any of the real concerns of employees and we know that a better deal can be reached.

"The current offer from management of 5% this year is inadequate and does not keep pace with the high cost of living.

"Rather than pushing ahead with a vote beginning tomorrow, we call on Sovereign Hill management to withdraw the offer and sit down with union members to reach an agreement.

"The wage offer on hand will mean a real wage cut after inflation; refusal to reinstate penalty rates will continue to punish those who work on weekends; and the refusal to discuss volunteer engagement opens up the risk for management to make good on their threats to replace employees with volunteers."

Mr Irvine said workers at Sovereign Hill were angry that management had said it would negotiate no further and has refused to meet with union representatives.

"Our members are proud to work at one of Victoria's top tourist attractions, and all they are asking for is a pay rise that keeps pace with unprecedented cost of living pressures," he said.

"It is now in the hands of management to avert the potential of industrial action by revising its offer to provide a pay rise in line with inflation, restore penalty rates and agree to a cap on the use of voluntary labour and a commitment not to use volunteers to perform the work of paid employees."

Union members will meet today and tomorrow to consider next steps.

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