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Wharfies launch fresh round of strike action at Australia's largest stevedore

Wharfies are escalating their campaign of industrial action at Australia's largest stevedore as they fight to protect their jobs from outsourcing and automation.

More than 600 Sydney workers will walk off the job for 48 hours from tomorrow morning, while 350 Brisbane wharfies will commence a series of one hour strikes at the start of every shift. In Fremantle, work will stop for 24 hours from Saturday morning.

The latest strike action follows a series of coordinated stoppages that shut DP World container terminals for between 48 and 96 hours last week, involving more than 1800 wharfies in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane and Fremantle.

Workers at all four terminals are also maintaining a range of indefinite work bans, including bans on upgrades, overtime, and shift extensions.

The Maritime Union of Australia members are taking industrial action in an effort to finalise a workplace agreement that would protect them against outsourcing, automation, cuts to conditions such as income protection and in support of domestic violence provisions in the new agreement.

MUA Assistant National Secretary Warren Smith said DP World is refusing to meet to negotiate a resolution.

"Rather than bargain, management have basically told workers to withdraw their claims entirely and accept the company's offer or there will be no agreement," Mr Smith said.

"We simply will not do this. Most of the worker's claims are not cost claims, they are about protecting our current conditions which were hard won and fought for historically by a previous generation. It's not up to us to undo the historical legacy of wharfies and we won't.

"Wharfies won't accept selling their jobs to non-union labour at lower rates and then having those contractors work alongside them on a daily basis. Our jobs are not for sale.

"We also want job saving protections and commitments from the company covering any future decision to replace wharfies with robots at these terminals.

"The escalation of this rolling industrial action is driven by our members and we support them 100 per cent in protecting their jobs for future generations."

The MUA remains available to sit down with the company to find a resolution and has consistently sought meetings at a national and branch level which have been rejected by DP World management.

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