

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATED UNION OF LOCOMOTIVE EMPLOYEES



Circular: 23/19

Ref: AZJ Myths
1/2/2019

Aurizon, Sure You Would Be Disappointed About Us Seeking Better Working Conditions

Dear members

We have received a copy of the employee update the company has sent out to you on Thursday 31 January and wish to correct the myths it contains:

Myth 1 - It was a terrible disappointment to all involved that the Unions did not agree to Aurizon's 'comprehensive' proposal

Aurizon's 'comprehensive' proposal to finalise the agreement was a basic roll-over with minor alterations that did not address our key issues nor many of our other claims. I'm pretty sure it's not disappointing to you that we advised we were not in a position to accept that offer at this time.

Myth 2 – The Company should be able to do whatever it wants to its workers and freely offer lesser conditions of work to employees based on where they work and not what they do.

The company want us to talk about core provisions, like annual leave and sick leave, in separate agreements so they can set different conditions for workers who perform the same work in different areas of the company. In short they want to screw the weakest areas of the company so they can make more money for their shareholders at our expense.

Myth 3 – Everyone is very disappointed that you are taking industrial action, this is a terrible affront to all concerned and you should be ashamed of yourselves for pressing your claims for better working conditions.

I am sure you are not disappointed about exercising your right to take industrial action. What is disappointing is Paul Hemburrow proudly telling us on Tuesday that Aurizon was refusing to meet with us in retaliation for you exercising that workplace right.

Myth 4 – The naughty unions (i.e. the union of employees who work for Aurizon and your representatives) are taking ages to respond to proposals

The Company have consistently taken weeks to respond to our claims. We have been waiting over 3 months for Aurizon Bulk to respond to our proposals, but they are incredibly upset at us because they didn't hear from us in Coal during a period of time when Aurizon was refusing to meet because we were exercising our workplace right to take industrial action. Aurizon have cancelled in excess of 12 meeting dates for either Core or Coal, the unions have cancelled zero.

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Myth 5 – the naughty Unions (i.e. the union of employees who work for Aurizon and your representatives) wanted to talk about bulk negotiations during a coal meeting which is very bad faith.

The Company's senior executive Paul Hemburrow raised the issue of talking about bulk, not the unions. However, whilst on the topic of good/bad faith bargaining, we've had to write to Aurizon on at least 4 occasions requiring the company to bargain in line with the requirements of the act.

Myth 6 the naughty unions (i.e. the union of employees who work for Aurizon and your representatives) have not put comprehensive claims on the table

The joint unions have repeatedly, meeting after meeting put comprehensive claims to Aurizon. There's obviously a problem with the company's bargaining team - and not your representatives - if they are unable to convey our claims to their leaders in a manner they comprehend.

The company are delusional if they think we cannot see through their attempts to make you and your representatives' look unreasonable so they can further their upcoming attempt to potentially terminate your agreements and place you under pressure to give in to their demands. We know you've been preparing for when they do this again, they might have caught us off guard last time but this time we are committed to the fight and ready for them.

Industrial action is something we do to further our claims, if the company doesn't want to come and talk about our claims, but wants to waste their time trying to make you feel like naughty disappointing children, whilst acting like toddlers having a tantrum themselves by refusing to return to the table, our campaign to further our claims can only escalate in those circumstances.

We have put a number of items we would like to see the company concede on to them on Tuesday this week. We have advised we would deescalate the action if they agree to the concessions. Without those concessions and without Aurizon committing to talk to us, it's time for us to pull together, dig in and get ready for the campaign.

Depot meetings are commencing next week and more will be planned in the coming weeks. I urge you to come to one of those meetings so we can give you some more of the truth behind the company's propaganda.

Please contact your state office on 3844 9163 or statesecretary@afule.org.au if you would like further information.

In Solidarity,



Michael McKittrick
State Secretary

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