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Media Release

Teys Australia wants union to “get real” and negotiate to protect 800 jobs”

The chief executive officer of Teys Australia has expressed his disappointment over today’s 24 hour strike by the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union (AMIEU), which comes during negotiations for a new workplace agreement.

Brad Teys said union claims that workers are being offered less pay was a smokescreen, as nothing has been finalised.

“All of our staff are paid – and will continue to be paid – above award rates. What we can no longer sustain are outdated and unrealistic employment terms that make us uncompetitive,” he explained.

These include 50 per cent leave loading, penalty rates within ordinary hours, forced payment for idle time and increased workers compensation benefits above that prescribed by legislation. Teys’ Workers are even mandated an extra “Butcher’s Picnic” public holiday which is never actually observed but requires penalty rates to be paid!

“The AMIEU seems determined to remain in the 70s, refusing to acknowledge the reality that unless things change there will be no jobs.

“Australians understand that the workplace model of decades ago where unions told you what you could and couldn’t do, and what you would and wouldn’t pay, is gone.”

Mr Teys said he was baffled by the union’s claim that the plant’s profit over nine years of \$38 million meant that the company could afford to bow to the union’s demands. “This equals an average annual profit of \$4.2M on a \$150M Asset base. That’s a 2.8 per cent return, decreasing to a one per cent return over the past four years.”

He pointed out that a bank would have provided a four per cent return with no risk - even at record low interest rates. “Does the union want us to lose money? It’s weird logic. If we are not making a profit there will be no jobs and who wins then?” he asked.

He said the forward view was one of drought, more hard times for producers and distorted markets.

“We must change the way we operate. We must reform or there will be no beef processing industry. We call on the union to stop the power games, put their members’ interests first and get back to the negotiating table.”

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