



RTBU NSW NEWSFLASH

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Aurizon – Some Movement, More Excuses

Yesterday, your negotiating team met with Aurizon's representatives to continue negotiations for a new Enterprise Agreement. Finally, Aurizon have put a wage position on the table with increases of 5%, 4%, 3%, 3%. However, the company has made it clear that this offer is conditional, any significant improvements to conditions, such as roster improvements or stronger redundancy protections, could see the wage offer reduced. While this is a step up from their previous "non-offer" of 3% per year, there remains a significant gap between Aurizon's position and that of members.

Aurizon has continued to suggest that the wage position put forward by your representatives does not reflect the views of employees, claiming that members are being led down an unrealistic path. It's therefore important that members are aware of the facts and understand the reality of the situation.

Over the life of the current Enterprise Agreement, members' standard of living has declined as wage increases have failed to keep pace with rising costs. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Employee Living Cost Index*, employees would have needed the following pay increases over the same period just to maintain their purchasing power:

2022: 4.6%

2023: 9.6%

2024: 6.2%

In real terms, a Level 4 driver currently earns \$129,908.22. If wages had kept pace with the cost of living, that figure would now be \$146,869.59. To restore wages to their previous real value, an increase of around 13% is required. The remaining 2% of the 15% wage repair claim reflects the additional productivity drivers have delivered over the past four years through changes such as increased labour hire, completing load/unload reports, and managing routes via the kiosk. Aurizon has advised the negotiating committee that each 1% wage increase costs approximately \$500,000, meaning the full 15% wage repair claim represents an estimated \$7.5 million investment.

Aurizon's claim that the wage repair ask is "unrealistic" is difficult to accept for several reasons. First, while members' real wages have declined, Aurizon's income was largely protected through contract mechanisms, as confirmed in their annual report, statements by the CEO in the *Australian Financial Review*, and contract presentations during negotiations. Second, over the life of the current EA (2022–2025), Aurizon's coal business generated over \$5 billion in revenue and earned more than \$2 billion in operating profit. In this context, the \$7.5 million wage repair claim represents only a tiny fraction of their earnings. Finally, Aurizon has paid out over \$1 billion to shareholders during the same period, averaging more than \$300 million per year. While the company can distribute these vast sums to shareholders, it claims it cannot meet a modest wage increase for the members whose daily efforts drive these profits.

Aurizon can and must do better. Members deserve fair wages that reflect their hard work and the profits they help generate.

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