

Very cross with Southern Cross

Dear Member,

Members could be forgiven for feeling double crossed by their employer. Many members at Southern Cross have given years of loyal and diligent service only to have a contract with lower hours – and in some cases lower pay rates and with shifts they can't fill put in front of them – with only a few days to decide what to do. And if they didn't sign they were given a letter threatening forced redundancy. Others didn't even get the opportunity. Some were tapped on the shoulder and told they no longer had employment. HSU has worked, and continues to work tirelessly, to get these members employment. This includes pursuing every legal avenue available to us.

To say members and their representatives were blindsided would be an understatement. Only a few weeks ago HSU was told there would be minor tweaks and some hours cut. And even halfway through the process, the HSU had to fight to get the actual number of hours cut from Southern Cross. We were shocked to find a total of 3996.7 hours has been cut across the organisation! That's 105 effective full time permanent (FTE) jobs. So probably double that in part time jobs. What could and should have been done differently?

1. Genuine consultation with staff and Unions prior to changes. Rosters provided. Hours cut by stream for every location.
2. Voluntary redundancies offer prior to rollout of draft roster. With 105 FTE going, redundancies were inevitable. Why not let people that want to leave go and leave hours and shifts for those that wanted to stay?
3. A transparent and fair process of deciding who is impacted. We are very concerned that SCC chose to target some individuals for redundancies or hours cut unfairly.
4. Availability and preference surveys prior to draft roster being produced. Many staff have care commitments. Why roster someone on a shift they cannot fulfil?
5. Introduce change at a few facilities. Then see what the negative impacts are on the business and staff before rolling the rest out. This is basic risk management.
6. Rollout changes in staged manner. Not all at once, leaving Southern Cross human resources and unions stretched to provide best practice and minimise impact on staff. It also would have given facilities the opportunity to quarantine vacant hours from staff leaving.

It's safe to say best practice was not followed in this case, leaving members and the organisation in a state of chaos. Morale has been irreparably damaged, as has

the once good relationship between the organisation and the HSU. HSU hopes the new CEO will bring some transparency and integrity back to the organisation which has let down its workforce.

Only members received one on one support throughout this process. It's another example of why in a modern workplace, workers need to expect the unexpected. Members going through this process were kept up to date with changes and given individual support at meetings. In many cases, organisers were onsite throughout the process for days at a time supporting members.

If you are not already a member, you are encouraged to join online at <https://www.hsu.asn.au/join>. Or alternatively ring 1300 478 679. It's safe to say it could be the best \$11.10 a week you spend. And you get to claim it as a tax deduction. Don't leave yourself exposed.

Any member still requiring support should phone 1300 478 679 or contact your local organiser.

In unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerard Hayes', with a long, sweeping underline.

Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD