

Friday, 5 July 2024

STATEMENT

Full Bench of Fair Work Commission allows appeal from unions

Wilmar Sugar and Renewables will continue crushing cane and producing raw sugar despite the prospect of further industrial action at its factories after the unions' appeal to overturn a decision of a Deputy President of the Fair Work Commission to order suspension of industrial action at Wilmar sites was allowed.

On Sunday, Deputy President Dobson ordered three unions to suspend protected industrial action (including work stoppages and bans) at company sites for a minimum of six weeks, from midnight on 30 June.

In her written decision, Deputy President Dobson said in relation to industrial action:

'...I am satisfied on the evidence that the protected industrial action has threatened, is threatening or would threaten to cause significant damage to the Australian economy or an important part of it.'

Today, a Full Bench of the Fair Work Commission in Sydney made orders to quash the decision of the Deputy President and orders made on 30 June.

A Sugar and Renewables spokesman said the company awaited the full reasons for decision of the Full Bench and reserved its rights on next steps.

"Our factories are all operating and we will continue doing all we can to keep them operating," the spokesman said.

"We will also continue to explore all options for resolution of the dispute and participate in bargaining at every opportunity.

"We have already suggested to unions some options to move negotiations forward."

The spokesperson said he expected that the Full Bench decision would not be welcome news for cane growers and communities desperate to complete the annual sugarcane harvest without further interruption.

ENDS