



Workers of [Maritime Union of Australia](#) (MUA) have begun a 48-hour strike at Melbourne's East Swanson terminal on April 21st, slated to end Saturday morning. This swiftly follows another planned 48-hour strike at the Patrick terminal in Brisbane just one day earlier. In response, [Patrick Corporation has threatened a lockout](#) on the hundreds of union-backed workers. The strikes come after an unrelated 48-hour strike in Sydney's Port Botany last week and 72-hour strikes in Fremantle the week before last.

A planned January strike was to be called off after an official of the Fair Work Commission (FWC) prohibited the MUA from taking action, but an appeal by the union proved successful. Just last week, Patrick sent a [proposal to the MUA with a deadline of April 15th](#).

On the same day, the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITWF) [made an official statement backing the MUA](#), with MUA general secretary Steven Cotton saying, "This dispute is about job security, it's about workers being able to manage their home lives, see their children. It's about transparent and accountable allocation of labor and fair compensation for an honest day's work."

According to an industry source, the port strikes are not anticipated to last more than one to two weeks at the latest.

The industrial actions follow a negotiation spanning several months between Patrick's parent company, Asciano Limited, and the MUA after the expiration of worker contracts last summer. Patrick terminals are also in the [final stages of acquisition by logistics groups Brookfield and Qube](#), whose chairman Chris Corrigan shares a deep history with Patrick Corporation.

This ongoing event hearkens to the 1998 Australian waterfront dispute between Patrick Corporation and the MUA, which resulted in the lockout and replacement of approximately 1400 union-backed workers in the ports of Melbourne, Brisbane, Fremantle, and Sydney. Patrick Corporation is purportedly the largest of three terminal operators in Australia, next to Hutchison and DP World.

For pressing inquiries and updates, please reach your local KWE branch for information.

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