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# media release

for immediate release

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Attention: Chief of Staff / News Editor

## UNION CRITICIZES QLD GOVERNMENT OVER SECRET GOLDEN CASKET SALE

The Australian Services Union has criticized the Queensland Government for not consulting with the union prior to today's announcement regarding the sale of Golden Casket to the Victorian-based Tattersalls, which also recently bought Unitab from the government.

ASU Secretary Julie Bignell said "The announcement today of the sale as a fait accompli is a very poor demonstration of good faith to Golden Casket staff, whose most recent enterprise bargaining agreement was only last week lodged with the Employment Advocate in the WorkChoices jurisdiction.

Now we find out that, not only were staff deliberately kept in the dark during these negotiations, but that some of those conditions within the agreement won't flow on to new staff after the sale goes through. Quite frankly the staff would be justified in re-opening negotiations on this basis alone and we'll be consulting with them about their views. Let's hope it was just a strange coincidence that the week after their agreement was lodged, we now have the announcement", Ms Bignell said.

The union says that staff might have considered different claims to make on their employer during their negotiations if they had known that they were about to lose the protection of the state government as an employer under WorkChoices.

"Staff will obviously be worse off. The new company will be able to freely use WorkChoices against them, and the government's policy won't apply. New staff employed post-sale will lose access to the government superannuation fund as well as the job security guarantee I have heard the government has made to existing employees. Given that I have also been told that Voluntary Redundancies are about to be offered, it doesn't take Einstein to figure out that wages and conditions at Golden Casket are under threat of going south in more ways than one", said Ms Bignell.

"I am extremely disappointed that the Union has now been left with a couple of weeks to try to secure pay and conditions for these workers which were only last week agreed to for the next 2 years. The government may well say that they have made commitments about that but quite frankly it's all care and no responsibility.

Unless all existing government commitments to staff are enshrined in legislation they can't say that staff won't lose. We shouldn't be in the position of trying to sort that out at the last minute, but as usual, the workers get the last consideration. I am absolutely appalled at the timing of this announcement, which makes a mockery of our recent negotiations and puts the government in a very poor light indeed."

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