

CCAWUSA moves towards a living wage

As a result of wage negotiations between CCAWUSA and Pick 'n' Pay the highest wage increase in South African labour history for a large group of workers has been achieved. For the first time also in a major retailer May Day and June 16th have been negotiated and agreed as paid holidays for all union members at Pick 'n' Pay. As such this is an important precedent setting move.

An across the board increase of R100 has been negotiated. This is effectively from March 1st, covers the next 12 months and does not involve split increases or an anniversary date system. This is a 25.6 percent increase for the lowest paid members and the increase affects over 13,300 workers.

The minimum wage in Pick 'n' Pay has also been increased by R100 to R490 per month. The average wage is now R612 per month.

In line with COSATU's living wage campaign the union's position during the negotiations was that Pick 'n' Pay must pay a living wage that will enable workers to lead a decent life.

The union also tabled demands on equal training opportunities, a 40 hour week and no tax deductions. Serious discussions were carried out on these topics - the fact that people are not simply born to work and that workers are not willing to pay for their own oppression were put to management. Management were requested to take the union's statements to members of the government.

Negotiations were conducted and the agreement achieved over a relatively short period of time. This is an indication of the level of organisation and stature of CCAWUSA in Pick 'n' Pay.

Last year in a precedent setting move and after a major occupation of Pick 'n' Pay stores an across the board increase of R85 was negotiated. This had a ripple effect on other retailers. This wage agreement should have significant consequences for the retail trade as a whole and add further impetus to COSATU's living wage campaign.

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