

Press Release : Immediate

The Southern African Clothing & Textile Workers' Union (SACTWU) welcomes the news that the National Bargaining Council for the Clothing Manufacturing Industry (NBC) has won an important arbitration award against a non-compliant clothing employer.

In summary, the details are that Rowmoor, a clothing manufacturing company based in Qwa-Qwa, has during December 2007 failed to pay its workers the required annual bonuses, outstanding wages and annual leave pay.

The company then (on 14 January 2008) advised their staff that all employees were placed on short time. The union reported the matter to the NBC. The NBC instituted legal action against the company. SACTWU joined in this action. The matter was determined in arbitration, and the punishment in the arbitration award was a R4.1 million fine imposed on the company.

The award also establishes some potential precedent setting legal principles on short time, including that the imposition of short time must be preceded by proper consultation with the trade union, there should be meaningful engagement based on the release of relevant information that would enable the union to engage effectively in consultation and the short time is intended to be only a temporary measure setting 6 weeks as a time period guideline.

The financial compensation awarded by the Arbitrator is the biggest ever amount made in the industry; he awarded R4.1, including legal costs.

The trade union welcomes this award and calls on the clothing bargaining council to further step up its legal and criminal steps against non-complaint employers in the clothing industry.

Issued by

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SACTWU

Deputy General Secretary

If further information is required, kindly email Andre on andrek@sactwu.org.za . He is currently in a national meeting of SACTWY and will attempt his best to reply to short email questions from the media.