



MEDIA RELEASE

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Dancers vote no to pay cut at The Australian Ballet

Dancers at The Australian Ballet have overwhelmingly rejected a management offer that would have seen their pay fall behind the cost of living.

In a ballot conducted earlier this week, dancers voted by four-to-one against the offer of a 1% pay rise that was pushed through by the company against the will of the dancers and their union representatives.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance is now calling on The Australian Ballet management to come back to the negotiating table to discuss a genuine outcome with dancers.

“The result of this vote sends an unequivocal message to management it must bargain in good faith for a fair pay rise,” said MEAA Equity Director Michelle Rae.

“Dancers were insulted by the 1% offer from management. Management also wanted dancers to accept the removal from their agreement of a clause which ensures their wages keep pace with the cost of living.

“Dancers have made huge sacrifices over the past three years to support the Ballet, including a 50% pay cut and a wage freeze at one stage, and there has been no recognition of their contribution from management.

“Like all workers, they are struggling with the rising cost of living. Many had to dip into their savings during the pandemic and today they are living a hand to mouth existence.

“These dancers are the best in the country and have dedicated their lives to their art. They love working at The Australian Ballet – their hard work, skill and loyalty must be recognised by management.

“After dancers took industrial action by holding the curtain for 15 minutes, management’s response was a punitive cancellation of a performance dancers had spent weeks rehearsing for.

“If anything, the actions of the management of The Australian Ballet to push through this vote against the wishes of their workers has only hardened the resolve of dancers to win a fair deal.

“It is time CEO and Board of The Australian Ballet stopped acting like a big business and began listening to their employees and to their audiences, who have overwhelmingly supported the dancers during this dispute.”

Sixty-eight dancers participated in the vote, with 54, or 79.4%, voting to reject the offer.

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