

The 11-week Mister Sweet Strike is over - Striking Workers Voted on Friday to Settle

By Casual Workers Advice Office

- *2024 increase:*
7% for operators, 6% for general workers
- *2025 increase:*
6% for operators; 5% for general workers
- *2026 increase:*
6% for operators; 5% for general workers

Mister Sweet lost a great deal of money during this strike in attempting unsuccessfully to maintain lost production. The only people who got rich were labour brokers, a lowly form of humanity, and a scourge on South Africa, whom the ANC has been falsely promising to ban outright since 2008.

During this strike, Mister Sweet chose to hire labour brokers to bring in casual workers at about R3000 per worker per week - R12 000 per month per worker - to replace the striking workers who earn between R6000 and R7000 per month.

They were willing to spend this money in a failed attempt to break the strike. They could rather have sat down with the workers as equal partners, calculated what the strike would have cost, and instead allocated these funds to improving salaries and working conditions in the factory.

This is capitalism gone mad. We note that casual workers, who line up in the dark every morning and wait for labour brokers to "pick them" for work that day, are among the most oppressed and exploited people. Often, female casual workers have to pay with sex for a few days of work at minimum wage.

Some of the casual workers who were recruited by Mister Sweet during the strike had their fingers chopped off by factory machinery and will find it very difficult to get work in the future.

Before the strike began, the Simunye Workers' Forum took a decision that we would not prevent these labour broker workers from working in the Mister Sweet factory during the strike. This was a principled decision that cost the strikers dearly because they were unable to shut down production completely. But we stand by this decision.

The workers and SWF will continue to organise factories in South Africa and struggle for decent permanent jobs at a living wage.

We thank the many organisations and individuals who supported the strike and consumer boycott of Mister Sweet products. The SWF will draw up a balance sheet of the strike and draw the necessary lessons. The struggle continues...

For comment, please call: Edgar Mokgola on 071 455 3500 or Jacob Potlaki on 082 810 6134

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