

# Sky City staff go on strike

About 60 unionised staff at Auckland's Sky City didn't show for work today, many joining a picket at the Sky Tower to protest a pay dispute.

The strike began at 10am and was to continue for 24 hours, with staff unhappy at the company's pay offer of a 4 per cent increase this year and 3.5 per cent next year.

Unite national secretary and union advocate Matt McCarten said there was plenty of passion from striking staff and they would continue disrupting the company's operations until a better offer was made.

„We can sustain this, we've been in dispute for a week and there has been action every day in most departments,“ he told NZPA.

Mr McCarten said contractors were being used but staffing levels at the casino and hotel were way down.

He said a ban on cleaning toilets which was applied today appeared to have had some foul consequences.

„I went and had a look at them (the toilets) and they are overflowing ... and the managers will be cleaning them up. If anything is going to break them it's that.“

Sky City said the union had rejected an „unpleasant duties“ allowance for the hotel's cleaning team and that „we wouldn't expect our people to undertake duties that we ourselves would not be prepared to do“.

A company media release today disputed several claims by the union about its operations and handling of the dispute.

The company said claims by the union that chief executive Nigel Morrison had been employed by the Sky City board to make

it a priority to extract a NZD 110m profit – NZD 44,000 per employee – were wrong.

„Sky City has more than 6000 people across all our business areas in Australia and New Zealand. Our strategy is clearly to grow revenue and to that end we’ve increased frontline staff by 268 people in Auckland since March 1,“ the company said.