

Casino workers demand higher wages

Hundreds of Star City Casino workers gathered on the steps of Sydney's premier gambling venue today to call for better pay.

Blowing whistles and yelling "decent wages, listen up", the workers called on the casino's management to offer an increased pay deal to offset rising petrol prices, interest rates and inflation.

Workers staged the protests to coincide with their shifts, with more than 100 turning up at each of the two morning rallies today.

The casino, in inner-city Pymont, is currently negotiating an enterprise bargaining agreement with its 3000 employees.

Today it upped its offer by half a per cent to an 11 per cent wage increase over three years.

But the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Union (LHMU) said the workers, including cleaners, security guards, chefs and dealers, needed an increase of at least 4.5 per cent a year to cope with living expenses.

"Workers need a better deal now, and we think the casino can afford it," LHMU branch President Jim Lloyd said.

Electronic games technician Colin Whillock, 58, who has worked at the casino for almost nine years, said many of his colleagues were being burnt by higher petrol prices.

"We need a wage that at least keeps up with the rest of the country," Mr Whillock said.

A spokesman for the casino, Peter Grimshaw, said the pay deal was "generous and fair" and would not be changed.

He added that a bonus scheme based on customer service scores would also be implemented.

Mr Lloyd said the first protest started at 4am, waking up a number of angry hotel patrons.

He said another rally would be held at 6.30pm at the next shift change.