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BRISBANE CITY COUNCIL

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QUEENSLAND SERVICES BRANCH

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ASU CALLS A FULL DELEGATES MEETING IN WAKE OF A.T. KEARNEY REVIEW

The ASU Services Branch has been attending numerous meetings with Council over recent weeks to try to ascertain the potential impacts of the A.T. Kearney Review and Council's introduction of Brisbane Best Value.

The ASU is now concerned that the process could result in significant restructuring of the workforce, job losses and could potentially have a serious negative impact on the community and the city of Brisbane. We are also disappointed by the actions of Council since the issuing of the report, particularly with respect to the haste with which the process appears to be moving.

At the unions' Industrial Consultation and Coordination meeting, held Tuesday 19 October, 2004, unions were provided with a briefing from the Steering Committee on 'phase 1' of the implementation. Union's were advised that a template was being developed for conducting business case assessments of AT Kearney's recommendation to exit completely four parts of Council's existing operations (City fleet, building maintenance, city venues, and car park). We were further advised that the Steering Committee allowed only four weeks to collate this information and make recommendations. Cabinet will then determine whether or not the businesses should be closed, and the service and jobs lost.

We have now also been advised that once 'phase 1' is complete, the Steering Committee would move into 'phase 2' and begin conducting detailed service delivery reviews for the other eight areas identified by the review:

- Operation of water treatment plants
- Operation of waste water treatment plant
- Operation of bus operations
- Construction and maintenance of roads, paths and drains
- Maintenance of water/sewage pipes and pumping plant
- Maintenance of parks and gardens
- Delivery of pest and vegetation services

It is your union's view that Council have a clear intent to exit existing operations and wants to use the current assessment processing and union consultation as part of the justification to do so.

It is the union's view that consultation is more than simply being asked to provide comment, within extremely tight timeframes, on pre-determined processes that will deliver pre-determined outcomes. The current certified agreement reaffirms the parties' commitment to 'genuine consultation and the consideration of management, employee and union contributions to decision-making'. We contend that the current process is in breach of this commitment. A process of such magnitude, with such serious implications for Council, its employees and the community, needs to be carefully investigated, considered and the subject of meaningful consultation.

We strongly object that the brief provided by AT Kearney has been based on establishing savings by cutting services with no regard to the impact on the community or applying any reasonable public benefit test.

For example, the union could identify that the sale of City Hall would bring enormous short term benefit, but would such a proposition be acceptable? It appears that the same type of consideration has not been given to all the identified areas that the report has targeted. We now know that this process will be extended to encompass all aspects of Council services.

It has also been announced that, over the next two years, Civic Cabinet will introduce a form of competitive tendering, otherwise known as '*Brisbane Best Value*', for all areas of Council. This step is a clear shift to zero based budgeting. Members working in the late 90s will remember the C-PAF Process which led to the sale of businesses and outsourcing of Council services. This process impacted heavily on employees; lowering staff morale and resulting in approximately 300 in-voluntary redundancies of ASU members alone.

This concept and assessment process called Best Value is an imported concept from Victoria and the United Kingdom which is just another form of competitive tendering of council services and must be rejected by members **NOW**.

The ASU will be calling a full delegates meeting in the coming weeks to discuss the review and establish a plan of action.

Unions will be meeting weekly throughout the review to ensure a strong broad-based campaign to secure our members' jobs and conditions.

