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Payouts take sting out of sackings

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THE issue of employee entitlements, which hit the Hunter following the high-profile collapse of companies National Textiles and Steel Tank and Pipe group, surfaced again yesterday with a landmark payout.

A dozen workers from air conditioning company **Miggins** lost their jobs this week after the company was placed in administration, casting a pall over the \$150million Crown Plaza development site employing 700 in Merewether Rd, Newcastle.

But the sackings were made bitter-sweet yesterday when the workers received a \$1000 payout each of their full entitlements.

These are the first contributions from an employee entitlements scheme, National Entitlements Security Trust (NEST).

Formerly known as Manusafe, the fund encourages employers to pay worker entitlements into a trust fund up front, winning the support of unions.

Retrenched **Miggins** em-ployee Dave Sexton, 41, a father of three from the Central Coast, praised the scheme yesterday, while hoping negotiations would see Crown Plaza's principal contractor offer him a new job.

'We might have lost our jobs but it has given us all our entitlements within two days so we can keep paying out mortgages, paying our rents and putting food on the table,' Mr Sexton said.

Australian Manufacturing Workers Union organiser Jan Primrose said: 'This is the type of result we need in a situation like this, a quick and easy payout of entitlements.'

The National Textiles and Steel Tank and Pipe collapses attracted widespread media attention as unions and workers fought to extract entitlements from the financial morass left when the companies were placed in administration with huge debts.

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