

TALKS RECOMMENCE WITH POSITIVE INDICATIONS



Dear members,

Talks with Telstra for a new EBA 2019 recommenced yesterday for the first time since suspending our ongoing campaign of protected industrial action.

Talks kicked off to a positive start with a focus on addressing a number of outstanding matters of contention that are preventing us from reaching Agreement.

Improving job security under new contracting out conditions

Healthy discussions ensued around an outstanding proposal being pursued by the SBU, where permanent employment would be declared as the preferred method of workforce engagement with the telco.

The proposed clause would also limit the extent in which ordinary ongoing work can be undertaken by contractors and implement a requirement for Telstra to consult with your Union prior to contracting out work performed by Telstra employees.

Additionally, the clause would remove the financial incentive to contract out – specifying that labour hire workers and contractors performing work on behalf of Telstra would receive pay and conditions no less than those employed by Telstra on the EBA.

80 weeks locked in

Telstra have again confirmed that a new EBA will retain the current redundancy entitlement of up to 80 weeks – well above of the 40 weeks provided for in the Award.

Parental leave entitlements will be improved

Telstra has agreed to the Union's claim to vary the parental leave clause, increasing the entitlements received by those currently known as 'secondary' caregivers to equal those received by employees identified as 'primary' caregivers. Essentially, all employees entitled to a period of parental leave under the EBA will now receive 16 weeks across all categories of care with the removal of references to primary and secondary caregivers.

Wage talks take centre stage

A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to attempting to break the impasse on pay rise outcomes.

Members have made it absolutely clear that;

1. The current offer of 1.5%, a pay cut in real terms, is too low and doesn't allow members and their families to keep pace with the cost of living; and
2. The pay pool proposal for Job Family employees is unfair in its current form.

The Union has made a new claim for a 2.5% p.a. wage rise, a level exceeding CPI, along with payment of a lump-sum sign-on bonus to be paid in lieu of backpay following approval of a new EBA.

Further, the Union has sought for the reinstatement of a minimum wage rise for Job Family employees who obtain a satisfactory level of performance (Rating 3 or above).

Where to from here

Telstra have committed to respond to our new wage claim and contracting out proposal at the next meeting, which has been scheduled to occur in 2 weeks' time.

Members should still remain prepared to re-engage in protected action should these talks not progress to a fair EBA offer. However, members should take comfort in knowing that today's meeting has brought us considerably closer to reaching agreement than we were prior to our commencing protected industrial action.

We will provide a further update following the next meeting. In the meantime, should you require any further information, please contact your State Branch Officials for assistance.

Yours faithfully,

Graham Lorrain
Branch President

Nick Townsend
Branch Secretary

8 May 2019