

EBA UPDATE:

12 JUNE MEETING



Dear members,

Talks are continuing with the Unions' Single Bargaining Unit (SBU) meeting with Telstra for further talks yesterday.

Pay – due diligence continues

Telstra is still considering the SBU's counter-offer to the company's current offer of 1.5% - a pay cut, in real terms. Telstra advised that they do intend to increase their offer – by how much, is not yet known. It is being considered as part of their broader financial plan for the new financial year and they hope to be in a position to formally respond at the next scheduled meeting on 26 June.

As a reminder, the SBU counter-offer includes:

- A 2.5% p.a. wage rise
- A lump-sum sign-on bonus to be paid in lieu of backpay back to October 2018 when the 1.5% wage rise was paid outside the EBA
- The 1.5% already paid outside the EBA to be protected in any new Agreement
- Reinstatement of a guaranteed minimum wage rise for Job Family employees who obtain a satisfactory rating.

For clarity, this counter-offer was endorsed following Telstra's repeated rejection of 3%. It was authorised by all members of the CWU bargaining committee, including Shane Murphy, Clinton Thomas, Dahlia Khatab and John Ellery, along with the CPSU and Professionals Australia – representing the three Unions who make-up the SBU.

Continued publications by certain minority elements claiming otherwise are **false and misleading**.

Conversion of casual to permanent employment

Discussions continued around a clause for conversion of casual employees to permanent employment which would create a process for casuals to seek permanent employment following 12 months of engagement, which can only be refused on the basis of reasonable grounds that are either known or reasonably foreseeable. **Telstra has resisted our efforts to introduce** a clause to recognise casual service as continuous service for the purpose of calculating long service leave, parental leave, and redundancy benefits, where the employee converts to permanent employment. Telstra deny any need for this, stating that they already recognise it by way of policy. However, we want to eliminate the possibility of the process being unilaterally changed and also to ensure that decisions made in respect of this are able to be reviewed under the dispute process. They have committed to consider our proposals further.

Parental leave

Telstra have agreed to our parental leave proposal – confirming that both primary and secondary carers would now be recognised the same way. This means both parents will have access to the same 16 weeks paid parental leave, up to 12 months unpaid and the ability to take paid leave allowing a gradual return to work. The general principles of this provision will be included in the EA with a supplementary policy document also being considered.

Long Service Leave

At the last meeting, Telstra sought our consideration of a proposal that would allow Telstra to direct employees to avail of long service leave in situations where more than 90 days of long service leave (LSL) have accrued. There is currently an expectation for anyone who has more than 90 days to take the 9 days that accrue each year, however this proposal would make it mandatory.

We rejected this proposal at the last meeting and Telstra have now confirmed that it will not pursue this as a provision of the EA. However, Telstra has not ruled out issuing a related policy direction in relation to this matter.

Voluntary redundancy processes

Although the actual process is outside the scope of the EA, given the circumstances, discussions took place about the process and how this can be better applied to provide certainty to individuals impacted by possible retrenchments. The suggestion is that an expression of interest from volunteers occur at an earlier stage in the process – prior to a final decision being made, with no further action being taken until that decision is made. This slight change currently being discussed is in response to feedback from members and will be trialled prior to any permanent change in the process.

Further discussions took place around the Selection Within A Group (SWAG) process– and particularly our concern that the characterisation of the 'group' is completely within management's discretion and determined without any real consistency. Similarly, there are concerns about calls for VRPs being made within wider groups that may include impacted and non-impacted members in circumstances where employees may be making a "blind" decision where their role may not actually be impacted.

Further discussion on this, and the other outstanding matters, will continue at our next meeting, currently scheduled for 26 June.

In the meantime, if you require any further information, please contact me on 0419 807 285.

Yours faithfully,

Graham Lorrain
BRANCH PRESIDENT

19 June 2019