

Talks recommence with Visionstream following NO vote on bosses' EBA

Bargaining with Visionstream management recommenced last week following employees' rejection of the bosses' EBA proposal earlier this month.

Whilst the bosses' EBA was voted down by a modest margin, the participation rate was over 90% - clearly demonstrating that employees are engaged in their EBA process and are looking for fairer pay and conditions.

This is also in light of reports that certain managers had employed scare tactics to influence the vote their way – by falsely claiming that new contracts could not be won if the bosses' EBA did not get up. These false and misleading claims may have had an unknown quantitative effect on the vote, however it is neither here nor there given the clear outcome.

Despite the rejection of the offer, Visionstream attended the meeting late last week proposing no real changes to put on the bargaining table. They have indicated that the pay offer stands as 1.5% and 2.5% for former Silcar and Visionstream employees respectively.

They have stood firm on their "need" for a Building Code compliant agreement. The veracity of this claim has and continues to be challenged by the Union, given the essential services exemption applied for and granted to Visionstream and many other telcos. In response to this, the company claims they have plans to tender for Federal Government funded works that are outside the telecommunications space, however it is not clear how such work would be performed by employees in the telecommunications-related classifications covered by this agreement. The issue of Code compliance is crucial to job security and genuine consultation – particularly where there are reports of employees being told to step back while contractors perform their work.

The Union also considered whether other avenues could be utilised to provide job security in the event of a Code compliant agreement and whilst we are sceptical of the availability of such measures, given the Code parameters, these questions have been taken on notice by Visionstream.

In an inflammatory move, Visionstream has advised that it will place an 'end date' on any back pay to be paid to employees if and when a new agreement is reached.

That is, back pay will ONLY be paid for the period of 1 January 2019 and 1 August 2019.

Visionstream may think that this will induce a yes vote sooner however it really is just bad practice to try and force employees to accept an inferior EBA, not to mention that given there currently is no agreement for employees to vote on so, at least for the for the present period, this is solely operating as a punishment for employees standing up and saying no to an inferior EBA.

The Union has urged Visionstream to reconsider this decision ahead of our next meeting.

Yours faithfully,



Graham Lorrain
Branch President
21 August 2019