

E-BULLETIN Postal

#14. Friday, 9 August 2013



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1. In-principle agreement on Decipha EBA

Following EBA negotiations with Decipha earlier in the week the CWU was able to secure further improvements on Decipha's last ultimatum. These included the following:

- Pay rises of 3% in the 1st year and 3% in the 2nd year.
- Redundancy pay increased to 16 weeks (currently 15 weeks) for 6 years and over and, 20 weeks (currently 15 weeks) after 10 years.
- All improvements to conditions that were previously agreed and then taken off the table by Decipha have been put back and are locked in and include a staged removal of junior rates, right to fair and reasonable access to overtime, allowances increased in line with pay increases, right to paid tea breaks - 15 minutes, right to 30% night shift penalty when worked - not after 4 weeks worked continuously, right to accrue annual leave for longer than 12 months, right to 2 days paid domestic violence leave and to use personal leave for domestic violence and more.

We would have loved to have won the 15% shift penalty across the whole shift or extend it beyond the hours of 4am to 6am but Decipha would not agree to budge. However, OVERALL this agreement is a good outcome for our members. Many of members' claims have been accepted and Decipha has withdrawn all their claims.

As a result, the union negotiating team informed Decipha that there is an in-principle agreement on the latest offer. Of course, Decipha workers will have the final say in a ballot to be conducted on the agreement.

Thank you to CWU delegates Bambi Keep and Anthony Graeme (this is the first time the union has had delegates from the shop floor directly involved in negotiations) and CWU members in guiding us during the negotiations - without your support this agreement could not have been reached. It's time all members asked people who have been getting a free ride to start paying their dues and join the union.

2. Manual handling work system at Post parcel facilities

Superhero cut-outs with speech bubbles are being placed in AP workplaces following workplace accidents – apparently they are part of Ahmed’s “I am for Zero” and “Stop, Think, Do” safety campaigns. No it is not a joke.

Current messages in the speech bubbles include:

“We will not have any injuries here today.”

“Someone injured themselves here. Please use correct manual handling techniques.”

“Mr & Mrs Safety encourage you to Stop, Think & Do.”

“Someone injured their back here. Keep your back straight and bend your knees.”

“We want you to go home injury free.”

“I am for zero....are you? Help keep our workplace safe.”



Superhero cut-outs with speech bubbles at AP parcels facilities

The union well understands the importance of reminding workers about safety issues but AP’s reliance on things like: demands to keep your back straight and bend your knees, use correct manual handling techniques and team lifting is not an acceptable work method and should only be used as an interim control measure. The way to reduce workplace injuries is to actually apply the Code of Practice for Hazardous Manual Tasks, address the risk factors or the source of the risk, have a visible and active network of HSRs and involve the union.

More mechanical assistance and proper work design are needed not gimmicks. Instead of cardboard cut-outs we need real people, i.e. active HSRs nominated and elected by the workers.

3. Concerns on new model motorcycle

The new Honda NBC110 motorcycle which has been in operation nationally for about 6 weeks with over 200 currently in use is not without its problems.

A number of issues mostly to do with the tyres and traction on the new NBC110 motorcycle have been raised by members with the union and sent to Post to address including, concerns that the tyres are slippery when going to different surfaces, i.e. grass to pavement especially when it has been raining.

AP has advised that this is the only tyre that is currently available for the use on the NBC110 but it is investigating a new tyre with more grip. In the meantime the new motorcycle is to be used in inner suburban areas only at present where sealed surfaces are predominant.

The new motorcycle also has more power, more torque and more responsive motor than the CT110 hence care needs to be taken to adjust to these new characteristics. Chain maintenance can only be performed by a qualified mechanic currently until training takes place at DCs.

PDOs who feel more comfortable riding the CT110 have the choice to stay on the CT110 for the immediate future.

4. Fixed-term matter in Delivery – over 600 in Metro Delivery

The union has received the current statistics on the number of fixed- term (full and part time) in Metro delivery across Australia.

There are over 600 fixed- term employees. Country fixed- term stats are still to come.

Post has had its employment freeze in place for over 12 months, employing people onto fixed term contracts instead. The union has pushed for fixed- term employees who have been held against vacant positions for over 12 months to be made permanent. Post has recently agreed to this, filling approximately 50 permanent positions. However there are another 600 positions not yet filled!

The fixed-term matter has been before the Fair Work Commission previously and the union has requested it be relisted. We will be seeking to have vacant delivery positions that have fixed- term employees against them filled with permanent employment.

5. Mail delays worsen due to lack of staffing

Delivery members have advised the union that a significant number of delivery rounds across the country are being left behind on a daily basis. This is thousands of letters not delivered on the day. Although AP may be meeting its Community Service Obligations (CSO) when did it become okay to hold mail back for the next day?

In some cases Post managers are purposely delaying the mail to cut costs. The employment freeze is also contributing to mail being left behind. Staff are not being replaced when they leave. More and more work is being loaded onto other workers who already have a full allotment. There are not enough Relievers. Basically, there are not enough trained PDOs to do the work.

With a Federal Election due 7 September and the increased mail volumes from same one wonders how PDOs are going to cope and whether politicians and customers mail will be able to be delivered on time during the run up to the election.

If you have any photos of mail being left behind in your delivery facility you can send them to us and we will put them in the following e- Bulletins.

6. Federal Election called - less than 5 weeks to stop Abbott

The Federal Election has been called and we'll all be heading to the polls on September 7th.

That means we've got less than 5 weeks to stop Tony Abbott's plan to roll back our rights at work.

Whether it is undermining penalty rates and award conditions, bringing back individual contracts, giving employers more bargaining power, or attacking unions and the independent umpire, there's just too much at stake to sit this one out.

Abbott's got working Australians and our rights in his sights - and we can't let him win.

While the constitutional formalities take place in Canberra and the parties ready their political machines, we've got people-power on our side with millions of members across the country and we need everyone in the game this election.

We and previous generations have fought too hard to have our rights at work taken from us. In 2007 our union movement proved that when you attack our conditions and pay, you'll pay the price, and we can - *must* - do it again.

Each of us has a reason to fight, but we don't have much time. Don't sacrifice our hard-earned rights at work by standing on the sidelines - get involved today: **click to follow link**
<http://www.australianunions.org.au/electionfight>

7. Unions welcome more funding to tackle asbestos

Unions have welcomed new funding from the Federal Government to tackle deaths from asbestos exposure with \$6.4 million to go to the new Asbestos Safety and Eradication Agency to implement the National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Awareness and Management.

Asbestos has caused a horrific death toll and much suffering in Australia, and the impact of asbestos-related diseases is not expected to peak until 2020.

The funding will go towards reducing future deaths from asbestos-related disease with another 30-40,000 people expected to be diagnosed in the next 20 years.

Unions have campaigned for decades about the dangers and have successfully banned it from Australia and helped secure long term compensation for people affected by asbestos-related disease.

The asbestos pilot programs announced by the government aims to identify and grade all asbestos by 2018. This is what unions and the Australian people want: safe homes, safe workplaces and safe communities.

Perhaps Australia Post will heed this message as the CWU has been attempting to negotiate an asbestos removal plan as part of an OHS Agreement with AP. While AP would not agree to an asbestos removal plan we have been able to get AP to share information with the union about its asbestos management program.

8. Kearney decries Coalition's IR policy as Mr Squiggle drawings

ACTU president Ged Kearney declared in a speech at the National Press Club this week that the Coalition's workplace relations policy resembled "a couple of scribbles on a page like one of those old Mr Squiggle drawings, with the details to be filled in later". "This is deliberate, Mr Abbott wants to avoid workplace relations as an issue until he has the election out of the way."

Ms Kearney said the Coalition's WR policy "manifesto" was a "deliberately benign and innocent looking document at first glance, but the party's fervour for labour market deregulation simmers beneath the surface". "Even if it didn't, the Liberal Party's financial masters, the business community, would always insist that workplace 'reform' remains at the top of the party's agenda".

And she warned big business plans were clear – "cuts to important entitlements and conditions, like penalty rates; more use of individual contracts that cut take-home pay and make it harder for modern working families to find time to care; swinging power back to employers, and making it harder to be represented at work".

Ms Kearney said she was tired of business groups making "outrageous claims" about the impact of the Fair Work Act on the economy. "I'm not going to waste my breath today," she said. "Suffice to say, on every measure - whether employment, inflation, economic growth, productivity or days lost to industrial disputes - we are doing well. No amount of spin can change those facts."

She said unions well understood lifting productivity would lead to better living standards, "but the way to lift productivity in Australia is not through cutting workers' pay and conditions". "The labour share of national income has already fallen by about 9% since 2000," she said. "The 'wages breakout' that conservative commentators keep warning us about never arrived. Instead, we now have a 'wages underhang', where wages have failed to keep pace with productivity growth."

Ms Kearney said instead of looking at wages - "Australia will never be able to compete globally on labour costs and nor should it" - business groups ought to focus on innovation, skills training, investment in technology and "dare I say it - better quality management".

9. Union to hold national Royal Mail strike ballot by September



The UK's largest postal union has decided to hold a ballot of members regarding a possible nationwide strike at Royal Mail.

About 500 representatives of the Communication Workers Union met in London last week to decide on the action in protest of Royal Mail's forthcoming privatisation, changes to pensions and the current pay deal on offer for workers.

The reps voted unanimously in favour of industrial action.

The CWU said a strike ballot will take place no later than September 2013. It will include 115,000 postal workers in Royal Mail and is set to be the first ballot for a national strike at Royal Mail held since September 2009.

Dave Ward, CWU deputy general secretary, said: "Postal workers are being squeezed in their workplaces, facing an uncertain future and changes to their pensions. There hasn't yet been a pay rise for staff this year despite healthy company profits of £403m. We want protections for job security and terms and conditions and these are sadly lacking."

"We do not take the decision to hold a strike ballot lightly. However, we will stop at nothing to ensure the future of our members' jobs - and of the services they deliver - are protected."

10. Royal Mail privatisation will lead to higher prices, service cuts

'Save Our Royal Mail' campaign director, Mario Dunn, explained recently why he believes privatisation is not right for the company. 'Royal Mail is Britain's oldest successful public enterprise, it isn't perfect but generally it does a pretty good job servicing Britain's businesses and its people,' he said. 'It does so because it is publicly owned, has obligations and ethos - all that will change if it sold off.'

Mr. Dunn said the claim that the sale is necessary in order to free up Royal Mail to compete is at best, disingenuous. 'Royal Mail does not need to be privatised to become more efficient.' 'It is investing in a long term modernisation plan that has seen mechanisation introduced and head count reduced.' 'Selling it tomorrow will not change that,' said Mr. Dunn.

Sadly the potential price rises many small e-commerce businesses fear from privatisation is inevitable as all Royal Mail's activity here is unregulated,' said Mr. Dunn. 'Additionally the Government will inevitably come under strong pressure to allow Royal Mail to reduce its costs by cutting loss making services, particularly its rural commitments.'

Of course when that all happens the Government at the time will be under no obligation to protect the current universal service requirement.



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