

E-BULLETIN Postal



Postal e-Bulletin 2014 - #5

1. **CHANGES TO AUSTRALIA POST SUPERANNUATION SCHEME**
2. **FORKLIFTS AND MOBILE MATERIAL HANDLING EQUIPMENT**
3. **CAMERAS ON BIKES AND HELMETS BECAUSE OF DOGS.....REALLY**
4. **SPOTLIGHT ON ROM**
5. **MEMBER RESILIENCE PAYS OFF IN LONG TERM**
6. **AUSTRALIA: THE COUNTRY OF THE FAIR GO FOR SOME**
7. **US POSTAL UNIONS FORM AN ALLIANCE TO FIGHT THREATS TO POSTAL SERVICES**

CHANGES TO AUSTRALIA POST SUPERANNUATION SCHEME

The CWU has written to AP seeking information on the impact on members of the unilateral changes announced by AP to the APSS defined benefit scheme. As members would be aware your National union sought commitments in EBA8 that ALL provisions in APSS would be protected. AP refused. It comes as no surprise to see these changes mooted by AP. Well over half of members are affected by these proposed changes the average gap between actual salary and salary calculated for superannuation purposes is \$8,000. This indicates that there will be significant reductions in members' final superannuation pay out.

If you are in the position where your salary for superannuation purposes is indexed because you have had pay and/or allowances cut at some stage in your career then please provide us with details. We will keep your name confidential.

See [AP's letter](#) of response to our questions.

FORKLIFTS AND MOBILE MATERIAL HANDLING EQUIPMENT

Members would be aware that AP is in the process of tendering for load shifting equipment. Field assessments were conducted in September, October and November last year at Melbourne Parcel Facility, Dandenong Letters Centre, Mt Waverley Business Hub, Sydney Parcel Facility and Sydney West Letters Facility. Load shifting equipment from three vendors was trialled and assessed. Risk assessments will be conducted on equipment from the preferred vendor/s.

Everything in relation to the tender is apparently "strictly confidential". However comments on the equipment and participation in subsequent risk assessment processes before contract finalisation is not confidential hence your national office has requested both. We have also requested the involvement of HSRs in the process.

Getting operators to use the equipment is fundamental in the whole process but could have been more structured. Users of the equipment need to be guided on their own experiences. The evaluation form was deficient. Hopefully AP's flawed process will not foul the desired outcome of ensuring the equipment is safe and fit for purpose.

CAMERAS ON BIKES AND HELMETS BECAUSE OF DOGS.....REALLY

AP has confirmed that cameras will not be fixed to postie helmets or bikes when questioned by your union following media reports.

AP said that cameras had been used in training in Western Australia to assess what training was required and to traverse a round to identify round hazards for training purposes. And one camera was fixed to a single postie bike to establish the identity of three unrestrained dogs that attacked a postie in Palmerston in the Northern Territory.

Dogs at large are always a worry and should be reported to facility managers who should follow up with the owner or local council about keeping the dog restrained.

However fixing cameras to helmets or bikes is not feasible. And not required to address hazards. Posties would not tolerate that kind of big brother surveillance. Indeed it would be a hazard in itself, imagine the cameras caught on low hanging tree branches. There are about 6000 motorcycle posties -who would look at the video footage!

If AP wants their managers who are designated 'out-door observation specialists' to ride around with a camera on a bike to identify what aspects of training are required or traverse rounds to identify hazards then go ahead. But the fact is that posties know what the hazards are and we are always ready to discuss how to eliminate or reduce hazards.

SPOTLIGHT ON ROM

Members would be aware your national union and retail members have been working with AP to improve the way in which data is collected for a ROM - now known as WFM (Work Force Management). As a result of that work there is now a diary for counter work to record NON-EPOS and EPOS work and a diary for back office work to capture real times so that adjustments can be made to AP's automatic default times to more accurately reflect a Post Office's workload. Guides for conducting a WFM have also been improved. Area managers must notify the PM at least 2 weeks prior to a WFM to ensure sufficient notice is given to employees to prepare for the assessment. The Area Office must advise the union on when a ROM is to be conducted. Employees are to report on whether all the business in the PO is able to be completed in normal hours of work, whether they were able to take their breaks, whether they commenced and finished at usual time. PMs and employees will have data to back up claims that their PO is not staffed appropriately.

We would have preferred to get rid of AP's flawed MODAPTS and staff POs according to the hours required to do the work. But AP is still fixated on using MODAPTS because it has allowed them to get away with understaffing POs in the past. We have however managed to increase the time allocated for OHS, still not enough so make sure you adjust the time if you need to. AP has acknowledged that merchandise revenue as a method for staffing is flawed but is yet to report back on how it proposes to change this. No one should be under any illusion that we agree with the automatic times in the system – we don't.

They are inadequate. We have also continued to push to have managers put in the real times for their outlet into the system. AP has agreed that in time PMs will be more involved in this process. In the meantime PMs and employees will be able to view the times allocated for their office and compare against their own data and armed with this information and assistance from the union better argue their case accordingly.

The working party will meet again in 3 months to review feedback on the new materials and whether employees have been able to make adjustments to the automatic times allocated to their PO based on data they have collected and take their breaks etc. Members are encouraged to contact the national office on cwu@cwu.org.au with any feedback on the materials and process.

Thank you to Louise Whitefield Melton PO and Kevin Brown Maddington PO and Philip Meyer ergonomist for all for your time and assistance on the working party. We wait to see whether we get better staffing outcomes as a result.

MEMBER RESILIENCE PAYS OFF IN LONG TERM

AP has had a change of heart in regard to prepayment of remote localities fares assistance for private vehicle travel. It seems that AP now agrees that employees will be reimbursed prior to private motor vehicle travel. And AP will not apply the hardship provisions requiring employees to demonstrate financial hardship in order to be paid in advance of travel. AP will have to retract their previous advice requiring receipts for fuel etc for the entire journey before travel for obvious reasons.

Your national union and local CWU delegate Lew Chapman from Atherton DC QLD have been arguing this and more since AP unilaterally changed the remote localities fares assistance entitlement some time ago. Thank you to Lew whose persistence has delivered this change of heart.

AUSTRALIA: THE COUNTRY OF THE FAIR GO FOR SOME

A \$27 wage rise per week for our lowest paid workers is essential if Australia is to avoid creating an underclass of working poor.

The ACTU last week lodged its claim with the Fair Work Commission (FWC) for a \$27 per week wage increase (or 71 cents an hour boost to lift the minimum wage to \$17.08 an hour) for Australia's lowest paid including cleaners, retail and hospitality staff, child care workers, farm labourers, and some factory workers.

The annual minimum wage review is the only chance for a pay increase for 1.5 million of Australia's lowest paid workers, and helps set the pay and pay increases of many more.

Australia is becoming a high cost country to live in and for low paid workers it's getting harder and harder to get by. Someone on a minimum wage of \$622 per week barely has enough to cover their basic costs.

Key Facts:

- *The Minimum wage is currently \$622.20 or \$32,355.44 a year.*
- *The Minimum Wage is now just 43.3% of the average full-time wage (AWOTE), the lowest on record. Five years ago, the Minimum Wage was 46.9% of the average. Five years before that, the ratio was 48.2%.*
- *Two decades ago, Australia's minimum wage was nearly 60% of average full time wages, ten years on it was hovering around 50%.*
- *The rise in the incidence of low pay is particularly sharp and concerning. In 2002, 13.8% of Australian full-time workers had earnings below two-thirds of the median; by 2012 this had risen to 18.9%.*
- *Over the past ten years, average full-time wages rose by \$211.30 per week in real terms, or 17.2%. The Minimum Wage was increased by just \$31.10 in inflation-adjusted terms, a real increase of 5.3% over the past decade.*
- *The Minimum Wage is only slightly higher in inflation-adjusted terms than it was in 2006.*

- *Statistics show that households with low paid adult employees have experienced a rise in financial stress and deprivation between 2003-04 and 2009-10. For example over that period the proportion that sought assistance from a welfare/community organisation nearly doubled, from 2.3% to 4.2%. Among households with only low-paid adult employees, the rise was even larger, from 2.4% to 6.5%.*
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Predictably the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry is willing to offer just \$8.50 extra a week, while the Australian Industry Group had offered \$10.

US POSTAL UNIONS FORM AN ALLIANCE TO FIGHT THREATS TO POSTAL SERVICES

Four postal unions in the United States have formed an alliance to lobby jointly against perceived threats to the US Postal Service.

The National Association of Letter Carriers, the American Postal Workers Union, the National Postal Mailhandlers and the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association issued a proclamation earlier this month forming a "Postal Union Alliance".

The proclamation stated that USPS was under "unprecedented attack" from a crisis it claimed was manufactured by the US Congress — a reference to the Congressionally-mandated payments USPS must make to the federal government to cover liabilities such as future retiree healthcare benefits.

Together, the unions said they would push for the protection of six-day-per-week mail delivery, the restoration of mail service standards and mail processing facilities and the provision of full-time, full-service post offices "in every community".

The Alliance will oppose subcontracting of work, suggesting that such policies were "fuelling the privatisation drive", and demand the expansion of postal services to include postal banking and other services. The unions have also denounced "excessive" pre-sorting discounts, which it described as "corporate welfare".

The unions described the formation of the Alliance as "groundbreaking and said "our efforts will benefit all postal employees and the people of this country who expect and deserve a vibrant, public Postal Service for generations to come."

"The goal of the alliance is to enlist public support in preserving the national treasure that is the U.S. Postal Service. The USPS is based in the Constitution, provides Americans with the world's most affordable delivery network, and is operationally profitable without using a dime of taxpayer money."