

# Enterprise bargaining – what's next?

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**With the Federal Government's new workplace laws about to come into effect, there are opportunities for Telstra staff to win better outcomes at work.**

## Door opening on negotiations

Telstra have returned to the negotiations, and committed to the "good faith bargaining" provisions of the new Fair Work Act. Telstra unions hope these moves mean a change to Telstra's aggressive and legalistic approach of past years. Two initial meetings have been held. Discussions have been about bargaining arrangements under the new laws, and provision of information about some of the major issues e.g. details of various classification structures and performance pay arrangements.

While negotiations have recommenced a positive outcome is far from guaranteed. Telstra employees will need to be prepared to stand up and support the issues that are important to them.

## One Telstra agreement?

Telstra has said its bargaining focus is staff still covered by the Telstra Enterprise Agreement 2005-2008. This approach may leave in place the many non-negotiated, non-union employee collective agreements (ECAs) – a product of Telstra's "divide and conquer" tactics of last year. Many staff have said they want to see a single agreement, including ECA areas. The new legislation allows unions to apply to the new independent umpire – Fair Work Australia - for a 'scope order' if there is a disagreement on who will be covered by a proposed agreement.

## Choice for AWA staff

Despite the Government's decision to ban all new AWAs over a year ago, some Telstra staff remain on AWAs with expiry dates running as late as 2013. Under the new laws, employee and employer can agree to "conditionally terminate" the AWA before the expiry date – so long as the proposed enterprise agreement is approved. This would allow the affected employees to vote on the new collective agreement – and if approved - the AWA would cease to operate. Telstra unions will talk to AWA staff who want to be covered by the enterprise agreement about their options.

## Industrial action

Recent amendments to the new legislation mean that unions will be able to apply for continuation of protected industrial action arrangements beyond 1 July. If approved, this will mean the members will still be able to take protected industrial action.

## Building support

Technical moves like applying for orders are not enough by themselves - we will need to build support for our case. *Telstra unions will be asking you and your colleagues to demonstrate your support for a single, union negotiated collective agreement, and for choice for AWA staff to be covered by it.*

## We need your help

We need to talk to all members *and* potential members to provide information about their new rights and build support for the campaign. If you can help get this information out to all Telstra staff, let us know by calling 1800 102 360 or go to [www.cepconnects.org](http://www.cepconnects.org).

## What if I'm not yet a member?

If you haven't joined your union yet, the most important way to show support is by joining up! Call 1800 102 360 or go to [www.cepconnects.org](http://www.cepconnects.org) to join.

**Where can I find out more?** 1800 102 360 or go to [www.cepconnects.org](http://www.cepconnects.org).

