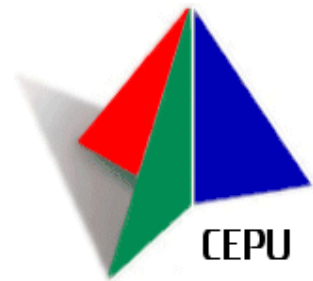


E-BULLETIN Postal

#6 Friday, 22nd June 2007



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EBA7: have your say

Very soon decisions will have to be made about how to protect your wages and conditions based on members' survey responses.

Across the country thousands of surveys have been returned. Make sure your voice is heard. If you haven't returned your survey send it in ASAP.

The survey will close Friday, 30th June 2007.

Post on EBA7: what they say ... and what they mean

Australia Post recently put out information on EBA7 titled, 'Everything you need to know'. Australia Post claim in this update that their offer protects your working conditions and that everything is locked in. Unfortunately, what they say and what they mean are two very different things as shown in the following:

On arbitration Australia Post says:

"An independent umpire can arbitrate on your important employment conditions..."

But what they mean is:

The only things that are able to be arbitrated are the employment conditions Post has nominated. What's missing from the list is anything to do with changes to the way work is done, how it is done and who does the work. Any proposed changes to these matters cannot be arbitrated.

On redundancy, Post says:

The RRR (redundancy) Agreement is locked in.

But what they mean is:

The RRR agreement will be incorporated into EBA7 – but without arbitration-protection. If Post changes its view on how the redundancy agreement works, this can't be arbitrated.

On enforcing EBA7, Post says:

"All of EBA7 is legally enforceable."

But what they mean is:

Once all the conditions that Australia Post doesn't like but are currently able to be arbitrated under EBA6 are removed employees can enforce the conditions left in EBA7 (excluding those items mentioned above).

Using WorkChoices as its excuse, it has cut the following job security clauses out of EBA7: dedicated delivery, franchising, contracting out and arbitration on all matters covered by EBA7.

On contracting out, Post says:

"We do not intend to contract out significant parts of our workforce."

But what they mean is:

Post could contract out every single MND job in the Northern Territory or Tasmania and in their view that's not significant because ... the number of employees there don't represent the majority of MND employees.

The message for members is clearly, read the small print before accepting the offer, buyer beware etc!

Wanted union activists

Thank you to CEPU members who have said 'yes' to becoming a CEPU activist and helping support our EBA7 campaign.

The union can only achieve what its members are prepared to stand up for and fight for. So support from members is not only greatly appreciated, it is crucial.

We need more people to get involved in the campaign, and we need more people to join the union to get decent EBA outcomes now and in the future.

What does an activist do?

Talk with others: One-on-one contact with other people in the workplace is vital. We'll provide you with weekly Delegates' Talking Points, which will help keep your workmates informed on EBA developments. If you're talking to non-members, ask them to join the union.

Hand out information: With your help, we can distribute up to date information on the EBA to people in your workplace.

Feedback: As an activist you'll have a direct channel to us, to keep us in touch with your views and ideas about EBA7. If you provide your email or mobile number, we can keep you up to date quicker via the web or SMS.

If you are interested contact us by email eba7@cepu.asn.au or telephone your State branch. We would be very pleased to hear from you.

Shift penalties and part-time employees

Following complaints from members that they were not being paid the appropriate penalty for additional hours, the CEPU wrote to Australia Post requesting the 30% night shift penalty applied to part-time employees working night shift continue to be paid during any additional hours worked by these employees.

Our argument is that the shift penalty appropriate to the employees' ordinary hours continues during additional hours. Where a part-time employee is entitled to 30% penalty for ordinary duty they should be paid the same penalty when working additional hours.

Australia Post's position is that part-time employees are not entitled to 30% penalty for additional hours.

As Post is refusing to budge on this issue the union has lodged an application with the Magistrates' Court of Victoria to recover lost wages for part-time employees that have been affected by Post's stance on this matter.

In the meantime it is important to remember if you are a part-time employee you don't have to work additional hours.

Telstra bullying employees

CEPU members who work in Telstra know first hand how the work environment in the company has deteriorated in recent years. Members are frequently reporting instances of bullying and harassment as the company tries to squeeze more and more out of its employees.

This week, the ABC let the rest of Australia see what is going on. Its *Four Corners* programme featured interviews, mostly with former Telstra employees and/or their families, about the stress that has become part and parcel of working in Telstra.

The programme revealed training programmes that encourage staff to label their fellow workers as "submarines" and "savages" if they don't shape up to increasingly unrealistic performance targets, intrusive monitoring of both call centre workers and field staff and a management that talks about "shooting" employees who don't adapt to Telstra's brave new world.

"If you can't get the people to go there," Chief Operating Officer Greg Wynn is quoted as saying "and you try once, and you try twice - which is sometimes hard for me, but I do believe in a second chance - then you just shoot them and get them out of the way."

Employees don't "get it": management

Sales manager, John Rolland, said that the real problem was not the Telstra culture but the fact that some Telstra employees just didn't "get it".

They get it all right, John. So do the dozens of other employees and ex-employees whose calls jammed the ABC switchboard when the programme went to air. Telstra staff members are fed up with the attacks on their rights, their dignity and their health that are fast becoming the norm in Telstra.

Comments on the programme are still coming in to the ABC's website. You can check them out at

www.abc.net.au/4corners/content/2007/s1952054.htm.

Increasingly Australia Post workers say they are feeling bullied and harassed at work by managers and supervisors as well. One Australia Post worker wrote to the CEPU as a result of the Four Corners program on Telstra saying, "It is exactly the same with Australia Post, maybe different tools but the same system of bullying - rigorous monitoring of individuals' time and movement. Particularly in Delivery, everything you do is documented on your daily performance sheet, even toilet, personal and tea breaks are monitored. They call it miscellaneous time. I don't know why they push and push harder when Australia Post earns millions of dollars in profit every year thanks to their workers. Management don't even think about that!"

Lawrence to replace Combet as ACTU Secretary

LHMU National Secretary Jeff Lawrence has been elected to replace Greg Combet as ACTU Secretary later this year.

Lawrence said in a statement that he was pleased and honoured to take on the new role. "All working people deserve to be treated with respect and decency at work and I am determined to work hard to see off the Howard Government and its unfair IR laws," he added.

Greg Combet who will resign later this year to stand as an ALP candidate in the next federal election congratulated Lawrence, whom he described as "a very decent person" who "has widespread support within the union movement."

In the speech to the ACTU organising conference last week Jeff Lawrence said he wants to see unions build national and international industry-focused campaigns and to mobilise their forces for the election.

Lawrence also:

- called on unions to better reflect the gender and ethnic make-up of society;
- cited "paint icon" Watty as the latest company to announce they will require all new employees to sign AWAs;
- expressed concern at the benefits of the economic boom not being shared equitably, citing the record share of the economy going to profits and rises in executive pay;
- made it clear he had no confidence in the Workplace Authority's ability to conduct what he called the 'fake' fairness test.

Lawrence is expected take over fully from Combet in August.

Priceline appeal to test operational reasons dismissals

Priceline employee, Andrew Cruickshank is appealing against a ruling in April by Commissioner Brendan Eames that Priceline chose him for redundancy because of the "genuine operational reason" of the company's financial difficulties.

If successful, the appeal by to a full bench of the AIRC would put all employers on notice that "you can't make someone redundant when you intend to keep the position they had." said Cruickshank's lawyer, Josh Bornstein.

However "If Priceline wins it puts all employees, no matter how much money they earn, on notice - you can be made redundant simply because your boss thinks he's paying you too much money," Bornstein said.

Cruickshank, a former space planner for the company, was earning a salary package of \$102,000 when he was made redundant last November before his position was advertised with a package of up to \$75,000.

This is not the first time companies have used WorkChoices to sack workers for operational reasons and then tried to rehire them on lower wages. And as in the past the Government has refused to say that this is illegal.

ALP claims Government has secret IR plan

The ALP maintains that a leaked government department document reveals a Coalition plan to both extend coverage of its IR system across the workforce and get 20% of workers onto AWAs.

Deputy Labor Leader Julia Gillard said the Federal Government planned to use threats to funding arrangements with the States to implement the plan.

“Mr. Howard can do this in part by making Federal Government payments – like the money under the federal healthcare agreements – contingent on Australian Workplace Agreements being forced on nurses and other health sector workers,” she told journalists.

“Of course, we know, the power of Commonwealth money is across money other areas apart from health,” Gillard said.

“We’ve seen Mr. Howard in the past use the power of Commonwealth money to force his extreme industrial relations laws on university staff, now we see his plans to force his extreme industrial relations laws on all Australians.”

The government’s economic modelling measures the economic benefits of building upon recent workplace relations reforms, including the likely benefit of:

- the State Governments transferring their IR powers to the Commonwealth to create a truly national workplace relations system;
- a fall in award coverage from 19% to 10% as a result of increased take-up of agreement-making, plus an increase in AWA coverage from about 5% of all employees to 20%;
- a reduction in the percentage of agreements made through pattern bargaining from 31% in 2006 to 10%.

Meanwhile the words of Senator Minchin should provide a grim wake up call for all workers and their families, ‘We’re going to do a lot more reforms’ – so-called reforms – ‘after the election’. The Howard Government’s so-called ‘fairness amendments’ are simply a pre-election ploy. The only answer is to get rid of the Howard government.

Postal union seeks further talks with Royal Mail

The Communication Workers Union has held off calling the first national postal strike for more than a decade in the United Kingdom, seeking instead further talks with Royal Mail over pay and productivity.

However, the union has been given a mandate by the membership to call for industrial action, if Royal Mail fails to respond. The CWU postal executive is due to meet later this week to set strike dates unless agreement is reached.

The dispute centres on Royal Mail’s pay offer – 2.5% plus a series of bonus and productivity payments linked to performance – and its modernisation programme, including automation of its sorting operations. Apart from dissatisfaction with the pay offer the union fears the loss of 40,000 jobs.

The CWU’s deputy general Secretary, Dave Ward said “Royal Mail cannot continue to hide behind the word ‘modernisation’ when what they really mean is cuts in services, cuts in pay and cuts in jobs.”

A Royal Mail spokesman said “The Company needs to modernise the business and is involved in a £1.2bn investment – the opposite of the ‘cost-cutting frenzy’ the union talks about.” But an internal staff morale survey which found that just 29% of staff believe they are valued by management and 21% say they have witnessed bullying and harassment comes as a blow for Royal Mail’s senior management.

No doubt the above story will sound all too familiar to many Australia Post employees - Big money for modernisation programmes but little consideration for the resulting job losses and no

money for a decent wage increase to the workers who are expected to implement the changes, doing more work with lesser resources!

EU assembly backs postal liberalisation

The European Parliament's main parties have agreed to allow full competition in postal services throughout the European union from 2011.

The European Commission had proposed the completion of the freeing up of postal services to full competition from the start of 2009 to include the collection and delivery of letters weighing up to 50 grams. Heavier mail is already liberalised.

However, the plan met with opposition from unions who oppose compulsory redundancies, want agreements honoured and are demanding a global agreement with UNI Global Union that includes dialogue and core labour standards (see below).

Postal action in fight against directive



More than 100,000 postal workers in hundreds of cities across Europe took part in a day of action on 6 June in the continuing campaign to save Europe's universal postal service.

A rally and march in central Berlin on 30 May delivered protests to the German government - who currently hold the European Union presidency.

Opposition is growing to a proposed directive from the European Commission to remove all protections from traditional postal authorities from 1 January, 2009 but without clear funding provisions to ensure all European citizens continue to have access to postal services at an affordable price.

The compromise was that the final date for liberalisation is 31 December 2010.

The deal is likely to find some favour with labour unions as the lawmakers will have agreed to back clauses allowing EU States to maintain collective bargaining and other agreements to safeguard employment in the heavily unionised sector. The EU postal sector employs 2 million people and is worth 90 billion euro (\$120 billion).

Meanwhile back in our neck of the woods the ALP will maintain Australia Post as the sole carrier of the standard letter service and the sole issuer of postage stamps. At the recent ALP conference CEPU delegates were able to get an amendment to the ALP platform making sure that Australia Post corporate retail outlets remain publicly owned and operated.