



31 March 2017

Water NSW Bargaining update

Today's update is prompted by the email yesterday from Water NSW CEO, Mr David Harris regarding the proposed new Unified Enterprise Agreement.

We are aware that Enterprise Bargaining is a new process for many of our PSA members and acknowledge the transfer from DPI Water to Water NSW, as well as SCA to Water NSW, was forced onto employees without them having a say in the matter. For these reasons we will continue to send updates whenever we can to keep members informed.

The first negotiation meeting will be held on next F7 April where we will meet with Water NSW and the other bargaining representatives to set out the procedures and processes for the negotiations. In yesterday's email, Water NSW set out for the first time the directions it intends to take in these negotiations. Your Bargaining Team's initial response to the initial set of Claims is below.

Single enterprise agreement.

The PSA (CPSU) is not opposed in principle to having a single instrument covering all Water NSW employees. The process however will bring many challenges and the union is determined to ensure ALL employees' conditions and wages are protected.

2.5 per cent cap on wages increase (excluding productivity claims)

Unfortunately the requirement for Water NSW to comply with this limitation as set out in the NSW Wages Policy is correct. Therefore the maximum wage increase able to be sought (excluding productivity claims) is 2.5 per cent.

36 hours a week and flexitime

Water NSW has claimed it will seek to move all employees to a 36-hour working week and change flexible arrangement in a way that suits customers and employees. Feedback from members so far working a 35-hour week is that they want to protect that as well as keeping their flexitime provisions. The PSA (CPSU) strongly supports a good work/life balance with less working hours in the week (for no less pay) and maintaining excellent flexitime provisions. Any move to increase members' weekly hours of work will only be supported by your Bargaining Team where there is overwhelming support for it, as well as an additional 1/35 pay rise. AND where there is no impact on members existing leave balances.

The PSA (CPSU) is keen to hear back from more members about what they think.

Your PSA (CPSU) Bargaining Team will fight to protect what members have, and what members care about. When different members have different conditions they want to keep, it's important that you and your colleagues join and support the PSA (CPSU). This way we can develop a set of conditions that suits ALL employees.

Base pay

There are no clear promises made by Water NSW that guarantee your take-home pay will remain the same.. Management is saying it "*will not seek to reduce any employee's base pay*". The PSA (CPSU) will clarify what this statement means. It does not commit Water NSW to protecting any employee's

take-home pay during the negotiations.

Not surprisingly, from what members have told us so far, protecting ALL members take home pay is a key issue which the PSA (CPSU) will fight for. This includes taking into account what may happen going forward over the next few years.

Fair Work Commission standards

The Fair Work Commission is required to set the minimum standards nationally as well as setting the minimum standards for each industry through the Modern Awards. The intention of parliament in how the legislation and the industrial relations (IR) framework is established is to encourage the take up of enterprise agreements as the primary tool of setting wages and conditions.

This means the Fair Work Commission only sets the minimum standards for Awards and the mandatory terms in Enterprise Agreements. The rest is intended to be left to the employer and your union's bargaining team to develop and build conditions better than the minimum in a way that suits the organisation and the employees.

Water NSW is claiming that only the minimum is good enough for its employees. The PSA (CPSU) totally rejects this and will claim that Water NSW employees deserve better than the minimum.

'Fair' Reward for Effort?

Water NSW is claiming three different ways to set the pay (and possibly conditions) for different Water NSW employees. Water NSW wants:

- employees who may potentially earn more to not be covered by the Agreement, and not have access to unfair dismissal.
- some employees to be treated differently to others.
- have the rest of the employees on set salaries, treated differently to everyone else.

The way to have "fair rewards for employees" is to have all employees be paid fair wages, to be

provided wage increases for all employees, and salary progression based on competency.

Divide and conquer

Water NSW is clearly trying to divide the workforce in order to drive down employee costs and conditions.

Proposing to remove employees with a "maximum pay of [more] than \$152,000" would include anyone whose salary band 'might' get up to \$152,000 even if that may never happen. This could move a lot Water NSW employees out of the Agreement.

The only way to ensure ALL Water NSW employees are treated fairly and equitably is to ensure that members work together and support each other throughout this process. Your Bargaining Team will be working with the other unions as well to make sure that together, members can have a strong, powerful voice in the negotiations and can support each other to get the best outcome.

Feedback can be sent to watereb@psa.asn.au

Your PSA (CPSU) Bargaining Team is:

Water NSW Delegates

Tim Budd, Andrew Harrison, Clare Purtle, Scott Butler

PSA (CPSU) Industrial Staff

Blake Stephens, Cassie Giudice, and Jann Jeffries (Senior Regional Industrial Officer)

Please forward this to your colleagues.

Be part of the PSA (CPSU) membership to ensure that your voice is heard during and after the negotiations – members can send feedback to WaterEB@psa.asn.au

JOIN the PSA (CPSU) online by going to: www.psa.asn.au