

15 September 2017

Water NSW attacking employees and unions

After months of further delays, a clearer proposal has been released by Water NSW and approved by the NSW Government. The result is a clear attack on wages for most employees and conditions for all employees from SWC, SCA and DPI Water. Water NSW's proposal also includes the complete removal of all union delegate rights and the provision of payroll deduction for union members.

The next bargaining meeting is scheduled for 25-26 September. The CPSU NSW will know more details about the proposals, and any potential changes the unions win, after these dates. What we do know so far from their complex offer is below.

The cuts to conditions that we know about so far are:

ONLY ONE GUARANTEED PAY RISE, the proposal offers an initial two per cent based on the 30 June 2017 salaries. For former DPI and SCA employees, the Fair Work Commission pay rise will off-set the two per cent.

- » Former SWC - 2 per cent 2017
- » Former DPI - 0.35 per cent 2017
- » Former SCA - 0.1 per cent 2017

In addition to this, Water NSW is offering one-off bonuses each year. This will not increase your base salary but be a lump sum. The badly named STI (Short Term Incentives) may provide a bonus to some employees based on performance.

The current State Water enterprise agreement has a trial performance based salary scheme.

In the first year, many employees received the increases. After the budget was impacted, the numbers of employees getting the further increases reduced significantly.

And there is more! There are no steps within the "Band Range" for the top three level classifications, and no steps in the "Grades" for the first seven level classifications. The additional two per cent increase to base salary applies to the Band and Grades, not the individuals. Water NSW has already indicated it wants the Band Range to be performance-based, so employees can move up and down within the band based on performance.

It is not clear how this would work, but with no steps for any classification, employees' salaries are significantly more subject to management discretion. Even with a (yet to be provided) promise that employees within each grade won't have their salaries reduced from year to year, there is no guarantee that the two per cent will actually apply to their salary.

EXAMPLE: John is on Grade 1, earning \$49,000 a year. The Range for Grade 1 is proposed at \$46,700-\$51,600. The two per cent pay rise (if John is not on a 'performance plan' at that particular time) applies to the Range. So the bottom of Grade 1 will move from \$46,700 to \$47,634 and it's not clear whether John's salary will increase or not. Any increase would likely depend on performance as measured by his manager.



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For 296 employees, pay rises to their base salary will be one per cent or nothing meaning any additional income would be from getting an STI, as a one-off payment. As the increase applies to the 'range' we are still not sure if employees will actually get the one per cent at all!

Former DPI and SCA employees to still move to 36-hour weeks with no increase in pay. This has already been rejected by the unions as not acceptable, and remains as part of the Water NSW proposal.

And the proposal includes more conditions stripped!

Enforceable redundancy entitlements will to the National Employment Standards, or the bare minimum. This means **enforceable redundancy of 12 weeks' salary** for employees with 10 or more years of service. Water NSW is seeking to have the MEE Redundancy sit within policy, meaning it is not enforceable like conditions in the enterprise agreement and subject to change by the Government.

- » **Forced annual leave** subject to more management direction, further details to be confirmed
- » **OVERTIME cut** with standard double time after two hours reduced to time-and-a-half
- » **Delegations under Legislation** imposed onto employees without higher duties when supervisor on leave for less than eight weeks
- » **Union leave for your delegates** will be lost, as will payroll deduction for members' union fees

- » **Flexible Working Agreement** to be replaced by a 'negotiate with your supervisor' scheme where many employees will work 'flexible' hours on set rosters
- » **Consultation for restructures stripped back** to the bare minimum for workplace
- » **Management of Declared Incidents** removed
- » **One week of Annual Leave removed** for employees in Western NSW for all new employees, placing this entitlement at greater risk for the next agreement.

WHAT DO EMPLOYEES HAVE NOW?

Former DPI Water and SCA employees have all conditions continued plus pay rises provided by the Fair Work Commission. CPSU NSW lawyers are continuing to claim the full 3.3 per cent for 2017 for those employees from DPI and SCA.

Former State Water Corporation employees have all conditions continuing under current enterprise agreement. However, pay rises need to be agreed.

WHAT IS NEXT?

The CPSU NSW strongly recommends all employees reject this proposal by Water NSW. All employees deserve better with conditions protected and improved, and fair pay rises across the board.

A single classification system is not needed for a new enterprise agreement.



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There is no need to place hundreds of employees on 'above headroom' where salaries are higher than their classification, and more pressure on managers to reduce employee salaries or limit pay rises for budgetary purposes.

If Water NSW does not drastically alter their proposal then the CPSU NSW will be asking members to consider possible industrial action. Members from DPI have certainty with conditions and pay rises, and SWC members should be afforded the 2.5 per cent that the rest of the government services get.

Industrial action under the National System requires the union to formally ballot all members, through a Protected Action Ballot Order, or PABO. Often just the process of members endorsing a Protected Action Ballot is enough to show management employees are serious in demanding a better offer. The CPSU NSW will be consulting with members about taking these next steps if major changes are not proposed by Water NSW.

The "unification" of multiple state and federal industrial instruments and classifications can be a long complex process. Union members should not have to accept a bad package, or wait indefinitely for a pay rise while this happens.

What can members do now?

The stronger the CPSU NSW is, the better outcomes we can get for all members at Water NSW. Ask your colleagues to [JOIN the CPSU NSW](#). Share this update with your co-workers. Discuss this proposal with your co-workers and ask them to JOIN in the campaign for a fair outcome for all Water NSW employees.

