



JOINT NOTICE TO MEMBERS

19 September 2017

COMBINED UNION EBA UPDATE

Over the past 6 to 8 weeks Ausgrid has cancelled and rescheduled several EBA meetings despite continual promises of a documented offer. When the EBA negotiating committee did finally meet on the 29th August the purpose was to introduce their new Ausgrid negotiating team headed up by John Stephens and Hannah McCaughey. For those of you who are not already aware John Stephens led the charge for the successful termination application of Queensland Freight Rail company Aurizon's EBA's which eventually resulted in a substandard agreement covering thousands of workers, being forced on rail employees by the FWC.

Under the previous negotiating team led by Trevor Armstrong we believed that some progress was being made towards a negotiated outcome.

The fact that Ausgrid risked sending such a deliberately provocative signal by appointing as their bargaining representative the IR Manager behind this landmark termination decision is revealing. The Aurizon decision is viewed throughout the union movement as symptomatic of the fundamental problem in today's Australia. The rules are broken – the rules which reign over EBA negotiations in 2017 promote job insecurity, loss of conditions without a pay rise that comes even close to any real form of compensation.

When the ETU pressed this matter with the CEO Richard Gross, he maintains that Ausgrid "has no intention of pursuing a termination application". We shall see if he keeps his word in due course.

Our view is that if Ausgrid present a document on 27th September it will still contain the two job destroying clauses that we are insisting need to be modified before we can reach agreement;

- 1. Unlimited forced redundancies from June 2020 onwards and**
- 2. The current contracting out clause which allows Ausgrid to contract out work at much lower rates of pay and conditions – thereby undercutting our members job security.**

We also believe Ausgrid will probably also re-introduce nasties that had been pretty much agreed on as being off the table a few months ago including the removal of status quo provisions during disputes and short-circuiting and watering down of consultation. We will obviously see how accurate these predictions are on the 27th September.

The message we are getting from members could not be clearer - negotiations have gone on for far too long and we have given enough.



In 2012 Ausgrid had some 6,000 employees – 5 years later that workforce has been slashed by about 30% to around 4,000. Our members have been subject to a 3-year wage freeze while Ausgrid executive salaries continue to rise unabated.

We have conceded to the company during the negotiations that they can have a forced redundancy mechanism post June 2020 - but that we want a cap on how many can be exited per annum and we don't want them to have the ability to contract out our members work to the lowest bidder. Ausgrid's response has been pretty much to the following effect;

“thanks for that we'll take your concessions but not only are we not giving anything in return – we want more concessions including unlimited forced redundancies and the ability to contract out work on whatever rates of pay and conditions we want”.

Meanwhile Ausgrid continue to act like corporate renegades by offshoring GIS roles to India and getting rid of another 11 emergency contact centre roles by abolishing the Sydney contact centre.

The time is approaching for matters to come to a head. Once Ausgrid has presented their offer we will convene a meeting of the combined union delegates and based on the feedback from that meeting and the reaction to Ausgrid's offer we will discuss our options under the Fair Work Act including taking protected industrial action.

In Unity,

Mark Buttigieg
ETU ORGANISER

Troy Dunne
USU ORGANISER

Margaret Buchanan
PA ORGANISER

Vera Babicheva
CPSU ORGANISER

Mark McGrath
CFMEU ORGANISER