



# JOINT NOTICE TO MEMBERS

12 October 2017

## ETU Delegates Vote Unanimously to Apply for Protected Industrial Action

Yesterday the combined unions delegates met to discuss Ausgrid's proposed Agreement. See the next page for a detailed summary. We have been negotiating with Ausgrid under the new owners for nine months, on top of the two years prior to that with the previous owners. **Instead of progressing in the negotiations we have gone backwards.**

### Ausgrid employees have conceded:

- a four-year wage freeze
- a forced redundancy policy post-June 2020 with a cap
- the loss of almost 2,000 jobs over five years. We are doing much more work with fewer people
- many conditions stripped including take-home vehicles, on-site gyms and taxis for shift workers.

### Management has given nothing and wants:

- to severely limit and weaken Consultation and Dispute Settlement clauses which were largely off the table six months ago
- a token wage rise with no backpay – conditional on acceptance of a severely limited career path
- reduction of your capacity to take annual and long service leave at half pay
- to switch you to a fortnightly pay cycle
- to reduce the number of occasions you can take sick leave without a certificate from seven down to four
- to direct when you can take your RDOs.

Delegates clearly told us at the meeting that our members believe enough is enough and things must be brought to a head. The time for talking is not yet over, **but it is now time for action.** The meeting unanimously voted to empower the negotiating committee to finalise a list of protected industrial actions which were discussed in detail at the meeting. Preparation of an application to the Fair Work Commission will now proceed that basis. This is the first step we need to take to gain authorisation from the FWC to conduct a ballot of members for protected (legal) industrial action. We will keep you informed on the progress of that application.

Ausgrid is desperate to put a positive spin on their proposed agreement that would, if implemented, result in the total destruction of job security, wholesale contracting out, loss of career progression, loss of any meaningful consultation or disputation rights – all for a small wage rise. **Let management know what you think of this offer – so the company understands we will not accept going backwards.**

The table on the following page details the major deficiencies with the offer identified by the delegates, and the impediments to a negotiated outcome.





Major Issues	Unions' position	Ausgrid's current position	Effect on employees
<b>Forced redundancy provision</b>	Forced redundancy provision in the agreement at the end of the job guarantee period but with an annual cap to prevent mass termination of employment after June 2020	Unlimited forced redundancies in the agreement at the end of the job guarantee period	Ausgrid wants to be able to terminate an unlimited number of employees
<b>Contracting out clause</b>	Tighter controls on contracting out to limit Ausgrid's ability to use contract labour to undercut our members	No change to contracting out	Ausgrid wants to be able to contract out an unlimited amount of jobs
<b>Dispute settlement procedure</b>	Retain current "status quo" provision – during a dispute the work practices continue as they were prior to the dispute until the dispute is resolved. Ability to dispute anything related to the employment relationship	Get rid of status quo to allow Ausgrid to implement their intended action without resolving the dispute. Limit the range of issues which can be placed in dispute.	This would make disputes almost meaningless as Ausgrid would be able to do what they wanted irrespective of the dispute.
<b>Consultation clause</b>	Retain current consultation clause which facilitates a genuine dialogue between management and employees and their unions on all change	Have consultation limited to matters which Ausgrid deems are "major" and have a "significant" effect on employees. Have consultation required on the effects of the change only <b>after</b> Ausgrid has made a final decision to go ahead. No need to consult unions unless employees give consent	This would severely limit the capacity for employees and their representatives to be involved in genuine consultation. All issues that Ausgrid deems "minor" and/or to have a "insignificant" effect on employees would not be consulted on
<b>Career capability and remuneration (CCR)</b>	Prepared to accept a reformed skills structure system but not at the expense of recognition of employee skills and associated career advancement	Change the current system of "have", "need", "use" to progress careers to one based on Ausgrid determining that you must have "exceeded expectations" in order to advance.	Too much emphasis on managerial discretion for career advancement and lack of clarity around whether current and new career paths will be shut down
<b>Pay rise</b>	Three per cent per annum unconditional over four years is more than reasonable considering the four-year wage freeze our members have experienced	2.5 per cent Year 1 with two per cent in Years 2,3 & 4 only possible if we accept their CCR	Wage rise proposal is too low with zero back pay. Making pay rises conditional on the current CCR proposal is taking with one hand and giving back less with the other

