

20 October 2017

CPSU NSW – Ausgrid bargaining member update and feedback requested

You would have now received a number of joint bulletins from the unions at the bargaining table at Ausgrid. This bulletin focuses on informing you of what the Community and Public Service Union ('CPSU NSW') has been fighting for at the bargaining table. The union also requests your feedback on some documents and most importantly on whether you support taking protected industrial action to get a better agreement.

CPSU NSW specific bargaining claims – what has your union been doing at the bargaining table?

In addition to the other issues reported in previous bulletins (see <http://psa.asn.au/category/ausgrid/>), the CPSU NSW has two key bargaining claims: gender equality and delegate rights. The CPSU NSW has made the following bargaining claims in writing and at the bargaining table:

CPSU bargaining claim	Ausgrid reply
20 weeks paid parental leave on full pay or 40 weeks at half pay	Ausgrid has increased the entitlement to 16 weeks (up by 2 weeks). The current agreement provides for 14 weeks. The CPSU NSW have held to our claim
Ausgrid to pay superannuation during parental leave period	Ausgrid to consider this issue
Paid lactation break entitlements for return to work mothers	There is a clause on this in the agreement but it is a watered down version of what the CPSU NSW submitted. Guidelines have been developed (see below)
A cessation of pregnancy clause - the application of paid parental leave to situations involving stillbirth	Ausgrid has not dealt with this. The CPSU NSW views this as a core bargaining claim
An EBA clause on anti-discrimination and gender equality	Ausgrid have refused to include an anti-discrimination/gender equality clause in the agreement
Stronger rights for delegate leave to participate in union activity	Ausgrid will not agree to a "minimum" number of days of delegate leave. Ausgrid has agreed to recognise part-time employees in the delegate charter, drafting to be considered

How the CPSU has been fighting for our claims

The CPSU NSW has engaged in a "war of correspondence" with Ausgrid throughout July 2017 regarding the above claims. We requested as part of our bargaining claims that Ausgrid form sub-committees on our bargaining issues because this is the manner in which bargaining has been progressing regarding other issues. Ausgrid initially refused to form sub-committees on our claims. The CPSU NSW threatened to take Ausgrid to the Fair Work

Commission for breaching good faith bargaining laws. The ETU and other unions supported the CPSU NSW by providing additional pressure on Ausgrid. As a result of this industrial pressure, Ausgrid reconsidered their position and in early August 2017 contacted the CPSU NSW advising that the subcommittee will be formed. The sub-committee has included representation and active participation from all the unions with higher rates of female participation on our request.



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There has also been a delegate rights sub-committee meeting where delegate leave was considered.

There have been two meetings of the Gender Sub-committee with another one due on the 1 November 2017. The subcommittee has discussed the disadvantages that women experience in the workplace around loss of super from parental leave (women have about half the super that men have at retirement age), the difficulty of balancing work and family life, difficulties workers face in accessing childcare, the lack of facilities for breastfeeding mothers in depots and for field staff, and workers having clear rights and an empathetic approach by management to situations involving the cessation of pregnancy. The issue of domestic violence leave was also discussed. Ausgrid needs to improve how they implement the domestic violence entitlement in their workplace as workers find they have to jump through too many hoops to access the entitlement.

Documents for your review – Domestic Violence Leave and lactation breaks

As a result of the Gender Equality Sub-committee, the following documents have been developed by Ausgrid which are now the subject of bargaining and union consultation:

- » Domestic Violence Guidelines
- » Lactation Breaks Guidelines

The CPSU NSW is seeking member feedback on these documents. Please send your feedback by COB 30 October 2017 to your Industrial Officer, Vera Babicheva on vbabicheva@psa.asn.au.

You can remain anonymous in your feedback if you wish. Ausgrid will also put these documents on the Wire, noting that they are the subject of consultation with the unions. Feedback will be shared and discussed at the next Gender Equality Sub-Committee meeting on 1 November 2017.

What next? Please complete our short survey regarding industrial action...

To fight against Ausgrid's unfavourable agreement, the unions plan to file a joint Protected Industrial Action Order (PABO) in the Fair Work Commission. The delegates meeting last week considered several types of industrial action. The CPSU NSW is seeking feedback from members about whether you are likely to vote yes or no in the ballot. The reasons the unions consider protected industrial action as necessary has been summed up in the joint bulletins. In summary these include: a 4 year wages freeze, inferior consultation and dispute resolution clauses that are the bare minimum level in their proposed agreement, mass forced redundancies post 2020 and contracting out concerns.

Please click [HERE](#) to vote.

More information regarding correspondence exchanged

If you wish to read the correspondence exchanged between Ausgrid and the CPSU NSW please contact your Industrial Officer and this information will be shared with you.

