

Have your say on new UEA offer from WaterNSW

As you are aware, WaterNSW is offering a new 'unified' enterprise agreement to replace the existing SWC Enterprise Agreement and other copied state awards.

Highlights of the package include:

- » Two per cent annual increase in wages
- » Additional annual Progress Pay for Zones 1-4 ranging from .5 per cent to 2.2 per cent
- » Additional annual bonus pay of up to 1.8 per cent in Year 1 and 3.6 per cent in Years 2 and 3
- » Enforceable redundancy entitlements in line with the NSW Public Service
- » Financial compensation for staff moving from a 35- to a 36 hour-week
- » Disputes about Job Classification outcomes reviewable by the Fair Work Commission
- » Four weeks' annual leave with additional annual leave for staff working west of the Western and Central Division
- » 17.5 per cent annual leave loading
- » 14 weeks' paid Primary Carer Leave, one week paid partner leave
- » Four weeks' paid personal/carer's leave accruing annually
- » Union leave of up to 12 days in any two-year period

CPSU NSW bargaining team analysis

The package offered by WaterNSW builds on the 3.3 per cent (2017) and 3.5 per cent (2018) increases secured by the CPSU NSW, is a substantial improvement on the Corporation's previous offer and provides scope for growth in real wages over the life of the agreement.

Recent inflation figures show the Consumer Price Index tracking at 1.9 per cent, with basic necessities such as electricity (increases of up to 20 per cent year on year), health care (up 3.2 per cent), education (up 2.8 per cent) and transport (up six per cent) all putting pressure on household budgets – we acknowledge this.

Negotiating a unified employment conditions for WaterNSW staff has been a complex exercise and must be viewed in the context of a hostile political environment.

While some staff have the limited security of employment conditions protected by the Fair Work Act 2009 for a period of five years (such as those covered by copied state awards), more than 50 per cent of existing WaterNSW staff (those covered by the SWC Enterprise Agreement) are vulnerable to the termination of their existing conditions and will benefit greatly from the protection offered under a new unified enterprise agreement.

Nor can staff covered by copied state awards rely absolutely on the Fair Work Commission to secure pay rises in future. FWC has invited WaterNSW to make submissions as part of annual wage review (AWR) process if the



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Corporation feels the AWR decisions should not apply to their staff.

Perhaps the most controversial element of the proposed agreement is the new 10-grade classification system. On this point it should be remembered that all transitioning staff will have their base salary protected, all staff will receive salary increases across the life of the agreement and future disputes about employee classification can be arbitrated independently by the Fair Work Commission. The union is available to assist members with this.

In our view the benefits of the new package overwhelmingly outweigh the negatives. Conditions of employment and remuneration rates remain highly competitive and position WaterNSW as an employer of choice in rural and regional NSW.

After nearly two years of tough negotiation the CPSU NSW bargaining team – Tim Budd, Andrew Harrison, Scott Butler and Richard Wheatley – strongly recommend the new package and encourage members to VOTE YES.

Have your say

As a democratic union, we let our members decide whether to endorse or reject any settlement offer made by an employer during a bargaining process. We've included a copy of the proposed agreement for your reference [HERE](#).

If a majority of members vote YES to endorse the package, we'll advise WaterNSW accordingly and campaign in favour of the agreement when it's put to a ballot of all staff.

If a majority vote NO to reject the offer, then we'll advise WaterNSW the agreement doesn't have our support.

For those members who intend to vote NO and reject WaterNSW offer, we're also asking you to indicate whether you'll support taking industrial action (such as going on strike).

We believe that after nearly two years of negotiation the only way we're likely to improve the outcome is if members are prepared to take action.

Click [HERE](#) to access our confidential member only poll.

The poll closes at 4:00pm on **Wednesday, 14 November 2018**

United we Bargain, Divided we Beg!!

