



12 July 2021

Why you should reject this offer - Part 1 - Leave

The CPSU NSW is strongly urging all members to vote NO to the proposed enterprise agreement Serco are offering from Wednesday 14 July 2021.

You may be wondering why though as this seems like a good deal, or you understand it is Serco's final offer.

It isn't in either case. This is the first Bulletin in a series that details the failings of Serco's offer, and where they are trying to short change you.

Personal Leave

Personal leave is your entitlement to paid leave when either you or a member of your family are ill or injured.

Currently you are employed against the Corrections and Detention (Private Sector) Award 2020, which is the absolute most basic set of conditions legally payable in the industry, and which no other Correctional Officer in the country is engaged through.

That means you currently receive ten days personal leave per year. The CPSU NSW asked for this provision to be increased.

Serco's initial offer was that you receive ten days or 76 hours personal leave a year. It was pointed out to Serco at the time that as many of you work 11 hour shifts, these are not the same thing and so which one would apply?

Serco then produced the proposed agreement that you are being asked to vote on this week, much of it done in isolation, and much of it not agreed by or even discussed with the CPSU NSW.

It will come as no shock to anyone that Serco has opted in this proposal to adopt the least generous possible interpretation available under a recent legal decision – 76 hours per year – meaning for most members they have less than 7 shifts a year covered if they are ill or injured.

It will also probably come as no shock to anyone that this is significantly less than Serco have been willing to provide their employees at other centres – your equivalents at Acacia Prison in Western Australia for instance receive 120 hours personal leave a year.

Remember, we are in the midst of a pandemic where the Government is recommending that you do not go to work when you have flu-like symptoms.

In offering inadequate personal leave, Serco are effectively forcing a potentially ill employee to attend work and placing the welfare of staff and prisoners at risk by doing so.

All we are asking for is a fair go.

Parental Leave

Paid parental leave For both primary caregivers and their partners has become an employment condition of major importance to many people and is commonplace in nearly all enterprise agreements.

It is a way an employer can attract the best applicants (which Serco claim they want to do) while also supporting current employees with new children to return to the workplace and not resign.

By employing you on the aforementioned safety net award, employees at Clarence were only entitled to unpaid parental leave. The CPSU NSW raised paid parental leave for both parents as a claim during bargaining but were rebuffed without yet being provided a reason why.

Serco's current proposal for Clarence is to offer no more than is in the Award. They haven't even bothered to detail it in either the proposed agreement or their policies, such is the importance they place on this vital provision.

In what is a concerning trend, this is inconsistent with Serco's provision to its other employees. Southern Queensland Correctional Centre Officers receive two weeks paid. Acacia Prison officers received fourteen.

Clarence employees may well ask...why does Serco value us less than our colleagues?

Other Leave

The CPSU NSW argued for provisions to be included in the agreement regarding compassionate leave, emergency services leave and domestic violence leave among other matters.

When Serco produced what they are putting to ballot, none of these were included, with Serco relying instead on its policies.

The problem with policies is they can be changed, without consent and without consultation. It is inadequate protection.

Once again Serco are looking to take the low-cost route with respect to Clarence.

Conclusion

Serco's approach in enterprise bargaining is to offer you the least that they think you will accept, not what you deserve.

Their refusal to date to include adequate personal leave, parental leave or other leave is one example of how this is a low ball offer.

That these conditions are given to their other employees makes this not just a company cash grab, but an insult.

The CPSU NSW says you deserve a fair go from Serco. We urge you to vote NO to this proposal.

Let's get back to bargaining, with industrial action to support us, and get you a better deal.



Sign up your colleagues

You can support the work of the PSA and your local delegates by asking your colleagues to **JOIN** their union.