

Optus Employment Partnership Agreement 2015

Bargaining Bulletin #1

21 August 2015

Bargaining has begun for a new Enterprise Agreement in Optus.

Two meetings have been held between Optus and the CWU, which is representing its members in the company. To date, no other bargaining agents have come forward to be part of these discussions.

The first meeting was held on Friday 14 August and dealt largely with preliminary matters such as timetabling and the general principles that would guide negotiations. Both Optus and the CWU submitted a number of proposed changes to the current Agreement. These were discussed in more detail at the second meeting on Friday 21 August.

CWU proposals.

Based on feedback from members to date the CWU has put forward a number of claims for improvements to the current agreement.

- **Pay rise.** The CWU is proposing a 3 year agreement with an increase to the minimum rate for each classification in the EPA of 3% per annum or CPI, whichever is higher.
- **Redundancy payout.** The CWU has proposed that the maximum redundancy payout entitlement be increased to 52 weeks.
- **Redundancy/redeployment.** The EPA should provide opportunities for voluntary retrenchment in situations where an employee's role has been made redundant e.g.
 - Options for swaps
 - Provision for review of a redeployment decision if an employee believes the role to which he/she has been redeployed is not suitable, with the option of voluntary retrenchment where role has been found to be unsuitable.
- **Domestic Violence Leave.** The CWU is seeking up to 10 days paid domestic violence leave as part of the new agreement.
- **Emergency Services Leave.** The CWU is proposing that the EPA provide for a minimum 5 days emergency services leave, instead of 3 days as at present.
- **Rest relief – overtime.** The CWU wishes to ensure that employees who perform overtime and whose last job is at a significant distance from their place of residence still get a significant period of rest relief. This could involve making changes to the rest breaks provisions (clause 6.14 (b)) of the current agreement.

Optus proposals.

For its part, Optus is also proposing a number of enhancements to the current EPA. Most of these reflect changes to the Optus Award that were negotiated by the CWU during the award modernisation process i.e.

- Clear limit to the number of ordinary hours that can be worked in one day (i.e. 10).
- 30% loading for continuous night shift (after more than 4 consecutive weeks)
- Regulation of 12 hour shifts
- Inclusion of a number of allowances, including higher duties, in the agreement.

In addition, Optus is also proposing to allow more flexibility in the way employees take primary carer parental leave by allowing it to be taken at half pay over 24 weeks (as opposed to 12 weeks at full pay). The CWU supports this proposal.

Next steps.

The parties will meet again regularly to continue discussions of these items, with meetings to be held each Friday for at least the next three weeks.

Meanwhile, members need to be aware that while it is still early days in these negotiations, the window for adding new claims will eventually close

Optus members who want further issues put on the table should contact their CWU state branch now.