



OPTUS EMPLOYEE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

SLD 09/301 – 2 July 2009

The current Optus Employee Partnership Agreement (EPA) is due for renewal in October this year. The company has already begun talking to employees about its proposals for a new agreement.

It is important that all Optus employees understand their rights in this process including the effect of the Rudd Government's new laws on workplace bargaining.

THE LAWS HAVE CHANGED

Under the Howard Government, employers did not have to bargain with employee organisations if they did not want to. This is no longer the case.

As from 1 July, when Labor's *Fair Work Act* commences, employees who are members of an employee organisation (i.e. union) will have an automatic right to be represented by that organisation in workplace bargaining. The employer – Optus – has to bargain with the employees' representative in good faith.

The Communications Electrical and Plumbing Union (CEPU) is the only employee organisation that has the right to represent any and all Optus employees.



HAVE YOU BEEN TOLD YOUR RIGHTS?

Employees who are not yet members of a union also have the right to nominate a bargaining representative in negotiations for workplace agreements.

- Optus **MUST** advise you of your rights to have such a representative and
- Optus **MUST** bargain with your representative in good faith.

These obligations become law on 1 July. Has management told you about these new rights?

THE CEPU CAN REPRESENT YOU

The CEPU has the automatic right to represent Optus employees who join up as members.

The CEPU can also represent other employees on an individual basis if they authorise it to do so.

Once Optus formally begins negotiations for a new Employee Partnership Agreement (EPA), the CEPU will be representing its members in those negotiations. In the meantime, it will be consulting with them about the issues that are most important to them in the next EPA.

EMPLOYEES DO BETTER FROM UNION-NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS

Although employees can be represented by a bargaining representative of their choice, the evidence shows that those who are represented by their union get better results.

For instance, data released in April this year shows that the average earnings of a union member are \$1026 a week, which is \$96 a week more than non-union members (\$930).

That is hardly surprising. There is always strength in numbers and in negotiating together. And unions have the resources and experience to do the job professionally.

Studies conducted in Australia and overseas have also found that a union presence in the workplace is likely to make it a safer place to work. A study conducted by the London School of Economics, for instance, found that the workplace injury rate was 24% lower in such areas.



FIND OUT MORE: CONTACT THE CEPU

If you would like more information about your rights under the new *Fair Work Act*, contact the CEPU on 9349 4411. You can also go to the union website at www.cepconnects.org or www.cephu.net.au

If you are not already a member of the CEPU, consider joining now! Download a joining form from the web site www.cephu.net.au or contact the Branch office 9349 4411 or email us at cdtsvic@victs.cephu.asn.au

The CEPU will be able to represent you in negotiations for a new Employee Partnership Agreement and in all matters relating to your ongoing employment under the agreement once it has been finalised.

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