

Special Signal

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DON'T VOLUNTEER FOR INTERSTATE WORK

Telstra constantly relies on the good will of our members to fill the holes left by its slash and burn job destruction/redundancies: Like volunteering for interstate work.

At the same time it calls on you to volunteer to plug its mismanagement holes, it is refusing to pay you the same as employees are paid in the parts of the business where non-union agreements (ECAs) apply. This will cost you thousands of dollars over the life of the agreement relative to the ECAs. Remember Telstra Management refused to negotiate for 12 months in order to pursue its de-unionisation agenda (sell its ECAs) and this cost you dearly in lost wages, super, overtime pay, etc.

Remember they only want to pay a 2% increase for 2009/2010, without back pay, even after you tightened your belts during 2005/2008 with a 7.5% increase only, despite the cost of living increases being much higher. Have a look at the fabulous increases paid to the managers over that period.

Remember, Telstra Management are working constantly to prevent justified upgrades in your classification based on the work you do for them, or to try to devalue your work in order to try to achieve downgrades in the future.

Why should you help them out of their mismanagement which has destroyed the jobs of many of your colleagues, by volunteering to work interstate to cover the management produced staff shortages?

CEPU members in other states are saying to us "don't come interstate until management agree to a decent, fair wage increase".

We reprint the following SMS from our South Australian Branch for example:

"Members in NSW and QLD have asked other states NOT TO VOLUNTEER for transfers to help with flood damage. They are taking action for a better EBA."

The Vic Branch is saying to you "don't volunteer for interstate work until further notice".

Contact the Branch with any difficulties.

WHY IS THE UNION (CEPU) CONTINUING THE EBA CAMPAIGN?

Some of our members report that some Telstra Managers are asking the above question. Let us attempt to answer it.

- * Management has cost our members thousands of dollars each by refusing to negotiate wage increases through 2008/2009.
- * In addition, this flows into the thousands of more dollars each for some in reduced payments for superannuation, overtime, redundancy payouts, etc.
- * Management are "offering" a 2.5% less pay increase than those employees in the non-union agreement areas (ECAs) who do similar work.
- * Management continue to demonstrate their ambition to attack the classifications and banding of our members and devalue their work.
- * Management are continuing to contract out our members' jobs with abandon and never a care for our members and their families.

All of these things are linked to the de-unionisation project they have worked on for a decade and a half (and continue to work on), and to cut costs at our members' expense. Let us repeat the evidence of their de unionisation project in summary form.

- they refused to negotiate with the union
- they have favoured ECAs, AWAs, ITEAs, contracting out
- they have an ambition to pay less for union agreements
- they attempt to reduce the banding/classification for employees governed by the union negotiated/agreed banding system

The question to put back to Managers is "why wouldn't the union step up its industrial action and its public exposure of Management's double standards in this situation?"

What Managers want in effect, is to kick our members in the teeth and then have them meekly accept such treatment.

If the disruption to Telstra's operations, has been bad up until now, it's about to get worse.

If public criticism of Management has been restrained up until now, it's about to get a lot worse.

It's unfortunate that Telstra Management has chosen the path that it has.

Management can fix it and quickly if they genuinely want to change.

OH – AND ANOTHER FURPHY.....

There is another furphy doing the rounds. It goes something like this: "The CEPU should accept the lower wage offer for its members because Telstra has negotiated improvements in other conditions which the ECA employees don't get."

Let's have a look at that. What are some of the issues on the table as a result of the EBA negotiations to date:

- The right to arbitration on matters that can't be resolved through negotiations.

Telstra has reluctantly agreed to pick up CEPU's proposal, put to them in the talks as a last ditch attempt to move them on this issue. That is that the Fair Work Australia mediator decides whether there will be arbitration on an issue. That is good as far as it goes, and something the ECAs won't have.

- Improvements in the redundancy clauses, including the utilisation of "swaps" and "volunteers" as an option before forced redundancies in some cases. This is good and not available to ECAs.

However, the CEPU agreed to cost saving measures in the redundancy clauses (e.g. scrapping of Telstra jobs programme etc), to achieve that improvement.

- A 10% increase in essential customer servicing allowance rates. This doesn't apply to the ECAs, but it of course only impacts a small number of employees, and the rates haven't been increased for a decade or more.

- Any new starters coming into the Customer Field Workforce and the Technical Workforce will come onto the union-negotiated and agreed banding system, not Telstra's non-negotiated banding and remuneration system, like in the ECAs.

Again however, this is a significant "watering down" of the original compromise proposal put to Telstra by CEPU in the talks in order to try to break the deadlock over Telstra's part a/part b model.

- Agreement to quarterly consultation with the union to "monitor" Telstra's Performance Management and Performance Bonus systems. This is not available to the ECAs. Again this is a severely watered down version of what CEPU required.

Yes these are important improvements that are not contained in the ECAs, but should it be expected that CEPU members/EBA employees sacrifice thousands of dollars for them? Who decides how much value those negotiated changes have? Especially when one considers how profitable Telstra is? Profitable in part, due to the effort and sacrifices by its EBA employees?

How many times do our members have to pay for a little progress?

TELSTRA STAFF UP IN ARMS OVER DIRTY EXCHANGE (An article in the media) The Australian 2 Feb 2010

TELSTRA is about one-tenth of the way through its ambitious telephone exchange clean-up program, but union officials have complained that calls to clean out and secure some of the dirtiest sites have gone unheeded.

The exchange maintenance program was started last December in an effort to spruce up Telstra's 5900 exchange buildings around the country, many of which had become run-down through neglect and urban decay.

So far, more than 500 exchange sites have benefited from the program as Telstra employees and maintenance crews improve the aesthetics of the

sites by mowing lawns, undertaking general repair works and removing graffiti.

"Our sites are generally in perfect working order but with many of them over 25 years-old they could do with a little sprucing-up. We've recognised that we can do things better, and that's what this program is all about – improving and maintaining the appearance of our sites," Telstra executive director Service Delivery Phill Sporton said.

But as Telstra staff steadily clean their way through the Telco's suburban exchanges, union officials have raised concern that lax security and maintenance measures are putting at risk the health of staff.

Officials from the Communications Electrical Plumbing Union say some exchanges are in such a state of disrepair that workers are fearful of entering them.

"They have to pick their way through used syringes, faeces, pools of urine, burnt piles of rubbish, food scraps and more," said a CEPU official of a Telstra telephone exchange in the northwest Melbourne suburb of Footscray.

"The complaints to management to clean it up and secure it just fall on deaf ears. These are the exchanges Telstra do not want you to see -- no attempt was made to include this exchange on the clean-up day."

Telstra says the Footscray exchange was cleaned up in December, but photos from the CEPU show it is an eyesore. Telstra has allocated \$150,000 to secure and maintain the Footscray exchange.

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Visit the Branch website:

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www.cepu.net.au

National website:

www.cepuconnects.org