



1 November 2011

POWERLINK TABLES OFFER TO SBU

VERY LITTLE CONSIDERATION TO UNION MEMBERS' CLAIMS

After 4 months of negotiations with Powerlink the SBU was presented with an “offer” to finalise negotiations yesterday. In the past few weeks, discussions around your claims were finalised with explanations and justifications provided to Powerlink. At the meeting held at Powerlink yesterday, rather than receiving a comprehensive response to the members’ claims, Powerlink tabled an “offer” document which ignored the majority of members’ claims, but included a number of initiatives which bargaining representatives believe will undermine your current terms and conditions of employment.

After questions were raised about the “offer”, which Powerlink were unable to answer, management sought a one hour break to clarify their position. On their return Powerlink then tabled a new “offer” marked “version 2”. The “version 2” document contained 14 extra clauses. Initially the version 1 document had indicated that if “in principle” agreement was reached through the offer, back pay could occur to the 1st of the Month. If agreed, this would have meant back pay to the beginning of October. When questioned about this unusual benefit, management were so confident in their offer that they stated;

“We don’t believe for a second the parties will reach “in principle” agreement today.”

Some of the key elements of Powerlink’s offer include:

- Pay increases below CPI;
- A very ambiguous reference to enhanced use of contractors to perform core Powerlink work;
- Individual Flexibility Arrangements – allowing managers to single out individual workers and remove their entitlement to the hours of work, overtime, penalty rates and allowance provisions of the Agreement;
- 3 year enterprise agreement from the date of lodgement with Fair Work Australia and not the current date of expiry;
- Blanket commitments to “productivity initiatives” without any ability for employees to be consulted during their implementation;
- Increases to part time hours of work without offering those employees full time positions;
- A consultation clause that doesn’t require actual consultation;
- Notice of termination of employment to be reduced to 1 week’s notice;
- Reduction in the ability for employees to raise grievances that don’t fall clearly under the EBA i.e. Grievances about policy or procedure

- A number of conditions to be captured in company policy – which can be changed at the employer’s discretion;

However there are a number of areas of the Powerlink offer which are an improvement on the current terms and conditions of employment. Below is a table highlighting the items along with the bargaining representatives’ comments.

| Item | Consideration |
|--|---|
| Availability to \$40 / day and indexed | Industry standards indicate that this rate should be closer to \$80 - \$100 day |
| Increase to Funeral Benefit to \$7,500 | Unions are still seeking to include a component for immediate family |
| Overpayments of wages can be claimed by employer to 2 years only | Does not address where employer approves the payment |
| Reimbursement of professional fees | Not all Union members will be able to claim reimbursement for their membership |
| Casual Loading increase to 25% | In line with the new Modern Award requirements |
| EIC to recognise supervision of non Powerlink employees | No increase to allowance |
| 14 Weeks special paid maternity leave | No recognition for paternity |
| Increases to Flexible Working Arrangement loadings 20% - 22.5% & 22.5% - 25% | In recognition of increases to availability |
| Access to pro rata long service 7 years | Not available on termination of employment |

Your Union is seeking your feedback on the “offer” document to assist with providing a formal response to Powerlink by next Tuesday 8th November. Please ensure you read the offer document and contact your local Delegate to provide your views and input into the response.

If you require further information about the ongoing negotiations, please call the union office on 1800 177 244 or email: members@qld.asu.net.au