

## Collective Bargaining Process Heats Up!

**In yesterday's negotiation meeting, the combined unions tabled our 'bottom line' position to Energex in an attempt to reach in-principle agreement by 30 November, 2011. Unfortunately Energex were unwilling to finalise all of the outstanding items on satisfactory terms, and overnight has sought the assistance of Fair Work Australia to resolve several of the outstanding matters.**

These matters are:

- **Wages:** 3.5% wage increase offer by Energex is subject to agreement being reached on Energex's proposed productivity initiatives. Unions are also continuing to seek back pay to the nominal expiry date of the previous Agreement and increases to some loadings and allowances that Energex say they cannot agree to due to the government's wages policy.
- **Duration of the Agreement:** Energex are maintaining that the agreement will be effective for three years from the 1st day of the month in which "in-principle" agreement is reached. The unions are seeking a three year agreement from the nominal expiry date of the current agreement.
- **Authorisation and access, and use of contractors:** Energex are continuing to seek the ability to use contractors to perform high voltage switching on Energex's assets as one of their productivity initiatives.

Your union representatives have made every attempt try and secure an in-principle deal and it's disappointing that agreement was not able to be reached. The application now before Fair Work Australia will hopefully assist all parties find agreement on outstanding wage related matters.

In other developments yesterday, the Queensland Services Union and Electrical Trades Union made an application to Fair Work Australia in relation to the protected industrial action ballot being conducted by the AEC at Ergon Energy and Energex.

Fair Work Australia issued an order on 4 November 2011, requesting the AEC conduct a ballot of union members in relation to the taking of protected industrial action in support of a new Enterprise Agreement.

Whilst this process has been undertaken over the past few weeks, the AEC closed the ballot three days earlier than what had been specified by Fair Work Australia – potentially limiting the ability of union members to participate in the ballot process.

Our union is monitoring the progress of these applications and will keep you informed of any implications it may have for our members.

**If you did not receive a ballot paper from the AEC, or if you received it only late last week, you should let us know ASAP by either contacting your local Delegate or getting in touch with the union office on 1800 177 244 or email: [members@together.org.au](mailto:members@together.org.au)**