



POWERLINK SEEKS TO STALL NEGOTIATIONS FURTHER

During the first day of this week's scheduled negotiations for your new enterprise agreement, Powerlink continually frustrated negotiations by seeking to have discussions in relation to "policy" matters and were unwilling/unable to participate in debate over the logs of claims.

The combined unions tabled logs of claims that were specifically developed for a new enterprise agreement, not a review of policy. However, Powerlink continue to reject our claims and seek to make amendments to existing policies as their preferred response. This is not acceptable to the combined unions as Powerlink's unfettered control over policies does not in any way address our claims. The combined unions have advised Powerlink that we will no longer be engaging in discussions in relation to policy changes and that we are committed to negotiating a new agreement. Unless Powerlink are willing to incorporate policies into the new enterprise agreement, any policy discussion needs to take place in a different forum.

The combined unions also expressed our dissatisfaction with the duration of time the negotiations are taking and the lack of cooperativeness Powerlink representatives are demonstrating by not engaging in genuine bargaining. The combined unions tabled our respective log of claims in July and August 2011 and have participated in at least 13 negotiation meetings to date. It is only now that Powerlink have completed gathering clarification and additional information in relation to our claims. This is far too long for an organisation to delay negotiations and not provide responses when this information is not new and similar claims are being sought across all industries by the combined unions.

Other Energy Corporations currently negotiating new enterprise agreements have surpassed Powerlink in their ability to gather clarification and provide a response to the combined unions' log of claims. For example, Ergon Energy commenced negotiations in August 2011 and were able to table an offer for consideration by the unions on 22 September 2011. Powerlink commenced negotiations in July 2011 and have been unable to respond to our claims. On 17 October 2011 Powerlink completed seeking clarification from the combined unions in relation to our claims and sought additional time to respond. Whilst the combined union claims differ at both corporations, there is no reason why the time involved in seeking clarification should differ so vastly. Powerlink have advised that they are not in a position to respond to our claims as they had to seek feedback from the "business".

Powerlink requested to use a scheduled negotiation day, 18 October 2011, to speak with the business and develop their responses to claims that they have had for well over two months. This is not good enough. The combined unions have continued to participate in negotiation meetings but, are constantly having to ask Powerlink when

the Powerlink representatives will begin negotiating with the combined unions. Powerlink will not commit to genuine negotiations.

As a snap shot the combined unions have received the following responses in relation to a number of our claims –

Union Claim	Powerlink Responses
15% superannuation	No response
Improved availability provisions	No response
6% wage increase per annum	No. 2.5% wage increase per annum
Agreed relocation provisions	No response
Transition to Retirement	No response
Overtime to be paid at double time for all hours worked and applicable to employees classified at level 13.0 or above	No response
Improvements to the TNRA Allowance/Payment	No response
RPEQ Allowance	No response
Genuine consultation processes	No. Powerlink want sole discretion in all decision making processes.

This is only a small sample of our claims but the question has to be asked – “Are the Powerlink representatives committed to negotiating the best outcome for their employees, or are they seeking to delay your well deserved wage increases?”

Whilst the combined unions are frustrated by the actions of Powerlink, we are committed to negotiating your new agreement and reaching the 20 November 2011 deadline, when the existing agreement expires.

After Powerlink advised the unions that they would not be attending the scheduled negotiation meeting on Tuesday 18 October 2011, the unions decided to use the time effectively and develop draft clauses for consideration by Powerlink. The combined unions will continue to negotiate the best outcome possible for our members whilst attempting to engage in meaningful negotiations with Powerlink and seeking to ensure Powerlink’s continual delaying tactics cease.

For further information about the ongoing negotiations, please speak to your local workplace Delegates or phone the union office on 1800 177 244 or alternatively email: members@qld.asu.net.au