

Telstra Enterprise Agreement 2015

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The CWU, other Telstra unions and individual bargaining agents met with Telstra on Tuesday 7 July to continue negotiations for a new Enterprise Agreement.

No agreement has yet been reached on any of the major issues being discussed in this round of bargaining, other than those which were dealt with early in negotiations ie preservation of the current 80 weeks redundancy payment and of existing leave entitlements.

However, Telstra has now stated its position in relation to a number of union claims. It has said, for instance, that it is not willing to entertain union proposals to bring certain Job Family conditions (e.g. higher duties payments, meal allowances) into line with those in the Workstream.

It has not agreed to a claim from Professionals Australia to include payment for professional development expenses into the EA (although it says that in practice it does pay such expenses in some circumstances).

As reported below, it has also indicated that it is not looking to make any major changes to the sections of the current agreement which deal with performance pay or to the way its GPS system is used in the field. These issues were discussed in some detail at the meeting.

Performance pay principles.

During pre-negotiation consultations, many CWU members told the union that they

believed that Telstra's performance pay systems were unfair and often, in practice, oppressive. A common complaint was that targets were unrealistic and unstable and that, in practice, employees had no opportunity to challenge them. All unions received similar feed-back from members.

The 7 July negotiations addressed this issue for the first time. Telstra indicated that in its view the new My Future system allows employees to have input into target setting and that its Internal Review Process allowed review of pay outcomes if employees thought they were unfair.

While Telstra undertook to consider the views put by the unions and to investigate specific problems identified in discussion, its overall position is that the current provisions of the EA around performance pay principles (Section 2, p.12) and consultation on their operation (Section 6, p.25) are adequate.

Allowances.

Availability of allowances varies between Job Family and Workstream employees. The unions have questioned this aspect of the current EA but Telstra has said that it regards the Workstream allowances as "legacy" entitlements which it does not want to extend to other sections of its workforce.

The exception is First Aid Allowance which Telstra proposes to make available to all employees covered by the new agreement.

GPS monitoring.

GPS monitoring was a major issue identified by CWU members in pre-EA consultations. The CWU has proposed that the EA should regulate the use of GPS systems in the workplace, including through explicitly ruling out its use for assessing individual productivity or for disciplinary purposes.

Telstra's position is that the use of GPS systems is a matter for policy, not the EA. It has also indicated that it considers the use of GPS-generated information for both productivity measurement and disciplinary purposes as legitimate uses of these systems.

The CWU will continue to pursue this question with a view to ensuring that these systems are not used to the disadvantage of employees.

RDOs.

The meeting briefly revisited the question of availability of RDOs, including Telstra's proposal that would allow RDOs to be worked during periods of peak load (or other emergencies) at overtime rates. Discussion of this issue is ongoing.