

TELSTRA

A WAY FORWARD

BULLETIN 6

4 / 7 / 2008

The telecommunications industry is rapidly entering the digital age and undergoing deep and rapid change. Consumers and workers need a voice at the table.

At this key moment in Australian telecommunications history:

- We have proposed a memorandum to management establishing a cooperative relationship so we can navigate these complex and fast-changing times together.
- We want to unite and preserve industry-leading conditions for all Telstra workers for the years ahead — those covered by the EA and those working through AWA's.
- We want to serve as a constructive voice for consumers and telecommunications workers as the Government deliberates about a national broadband network.
- We have invited the ACTU to participate in this historic dialogue to reflect the interests of all Australian workers.

Telstra staff supported by Deputy Prime Minister

Deputy Prime Minister Julia Gillard has personally offered her encouragement to Telstra unions' drive towards developing a new relationship with company management.

In a letter to Telstra unions she wrote "The Government is supportive of these efforts to build a more constructive relationship with Telstra. It is the Government's view that cooperative workplace relations drive productivity, employee engagement and satisfaction."

You can read Ms Gillard's entire message at www.rightsatwork.com.au/campaigns/telstra

"Constructive relationship" could usher in a new era

Members have made clear they support unions seeking a more cooperative relationship with Telstra.

A Memorandum of Understanding has been proposed by unions which outlines a way forward where:

- Unions recognise Telstra faces significant challenges in a dynamic industry including the current National Broadband Network debate.
- Telstra agrees employees on AWAs having a right to move off the AWA before expiry date and without disadvantage.
- Telstra helps new starters, union members and other employees access their union for advice and representation.
- A modern EA is negotiated which protects members' interests and recognises the needs of the company.

The aim is to move away from what unions believe has been in recent years a hostile, legalistic approach where only the bare minimum is provided.

A copy of the proposed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) can be found at

www.rightsatwork.com.au/campaigns/telstra

Bargaining continues

Unions have made clear that negotiations over of new EA should continue whilst the MoU is being finalised.

We have made it clear to Telstra that we want to represent all staff, no matter whether they are on an AWA or the EA. It is important all voices are heard, and that the EA provides a fair base for all employees.



Challenges ahead

Unions are currently monitoring developments in the debate on the national broadband network.

We are researching in detail the legal, regulatory and political aspects of the broadband process to ensure the following principles are upheld:

- a) Promote telecommunications investment to ensure quality of consumer service and technological innovation;
- b) Ensure trained and well-paid workforce positioned for telecommunications in the digital age;
- c) Universal access for all Australians - including for residents of regional areas, the disabled and those with accessibility issues, lower income and small business Australians;
- d) Fair pricing to promote competition that spurs innovation, consumer quality and lower prices;

- e) Ensure beneficiaries of the broadband investment have good industrial relations environments.

With the ACTU's involvement, unions have direct access to key decision-makers in this process.

Given that the Labor Government will ultimately make the decisions regarding broadband, we have made it clear to Telstra that we believe it is in the interests of their employees, customers and shareholders to change the perception of the company regarding its extensive use of AWAs and attitude to union representation.

What's next

Unions are continuing to represent all Telstra staff (including a significant portion of which are on AWAs) during EA negotiations. We'll report back soon about how the constructive relationship and EA talks are going.

Many thanks to everyone who has shared their feedback by emailing Telstra@actu.asn.au. We encourage you to send us an email if you have any thoughts relating to the EA.