



RTBU NSW Loco Division NEWSFLASH

October 3, 2024

Watco EA Update

Last Tuesday we had the 7th bargaining meeting with Watco Management. This meeting was very disappointing to say the least and wasn't very productive with many outstanding items still not resolved.

We started with Public Holidays, Watco showed spreadsheets providing their proposed calculations. We asked the question if there was a calculation based on the RTBU's claim and the reply was 'no'. The issues with Watco's proposed clause:

- Public Holidays (on RDO or Worked) a credit of 8 hours goes towards Duty Cycle.
- Watco admitted that towards the end of the Duty Cycle that they could manipulate rosters so that you don't receive overtime, negating the Public Holiday Credit.
- Calculations that were provided gave a benefit only if you were rostered off on each Public Holiday and were worse off if you worked on Public Holidays.

Remember your Public Holiday claim is so simple and aligns with the NSW Industry Standards:

- If you're on an RDO, then 8 hours is paid standalone.
- If you sign on for work on a Public Holiday, then the entire shift is paid at 1.5 and a payment of 8 hours standalone.

As we were getting nowhere fast, we advised that there was no agreement and that we would move onto other items.

Next item was the Training Costs. In every meeting with Watco since bargaining commenced, we have advised them that under no circumstances would the RTBU accept the use of Training Bonds. Watco even went beyond the negotiation team and asked employees to do a survey to gather feedback from members on whether Watco should keep Clause 21 – Training Costs. Many thought that this survey was confidential, but Watco is clearly trying to track who completes it and advised us that one of your EA Delegates completed the survey. Rest assured your EA Delegate, who has been named during Toolbox meetings, did not complete the 'Survey'. This again shows Watco's lack of respect for your EA Delegates, who are representing all members at the EA Negotiation Table.

We then continued with going through the draft Enterprise Agreement and while some of the missing clauses have been put back in, we noticed that there were other changes made without discussion or agreement. They are,

- Changes to Annual Leave dimensions. Watco put in 0001 to 2359 for each day of Annual Leave. After arguing with Management that this was a change, they then deleted the change, but to have a day off should be the same parameters as a RDO (0001 to 0600 the following day).
- Changes to Rates of Pay whereby currently you will receive a pay increase to every anniversary date of the EA to no pay increases when the Enterprise Agreement expires. Watco's changes

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mean that you won't receive any pay increases until a new Agreement replaces the old one, which in some cases, could take years.

Having being called-out for sneaking in changes to the draft enterprise agreement numerous times, it is almost beyond belief that it has happened again.

After dealing with that underhanded tactic, we discussed your pay increases throughout the term of the Agreement. Your EA Team gave 3 options:

1. 8% - 4% - 4% and 4%, (the preferred option)
2. 5% - 5% - 5% and 5%
3. Or 20% over the 4 years, cut anyway but the first year is to have the highest % increase.

Well, Watco advised that they had an offer, but instead of disclosing that offer they threw their toys out of the cot and stated that '20% is *not* a possibility' and then advised that there are 3 options moving forward:

1. Pause Bargaining – who knows how long for, or
2. Go to Vote without endorsement, to which we advised them we would campaign a "NO" vote, or
3. Continue with EA discussions.

At this stage, Watco hasn't advised which option they want to proceed with, but we do know that they will be in Port Kembla on 10 and 11 October 2024. Why they are there is an unanswered question, but what we do know is this 'agreement' has a long way to go before there is a fair and reasonable offer to put to employees.

The word "Flexibility" is Watco's favourite word, which has been used many times in each bargaining meeting - "*We need Flexibility*"

Flexibility means – how far can we screw the workers.

If members have issues or enquiries, please contact Kevin Pryor on 0417105356.

Not a member, then join today (click on link below), or if you have any questions about joining, please contact the RTBU Head Office on (02) 9264 3400.

