



ESTA News

There are a number of issues which CEPU has been taking up on behalf of members over a period of time. The following are brief reports on those issues.

STAFFING LEVELS IN BUSIER TIMES

The union has had preliminary discussions with ESTA about the inadequate staffing situations at weekends when the call volumes are high. We have made it clear to Management that the situation is unsatisfactory.

The Human Resources Department of ESTA is investigating options and the CEPU is due to meet Management again shortly on the issue.

PUBLIC HOLIDAY PAYMENT – PART TIME WORKERS

The following representation has been made by CEPU to ESTA:

“Some matters of confusion have arisen out of the payments which various employees in ESTA have received for working the Australia day public holiday weekend. I have reviewed the relevant documentation from the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (AIRC) as regards this matter, and I also have a document (“Public Holiday Test Case Provisions”), which outlines ESTA’s interpretation of the how various employees are paid in these circumstances.

The primary point of contention that I am aware of thus far is with the arrangements for part-time employees. The ESTA document makes some important distinctions between full-time and part-time employees, yet the AIRC documentation that I have seen in relation to the Public Holiday Test case provisions contains no such distinction. The ESTA document suggests that no public holiday shift penalty should be paid to a part time worker who works *both* the public holiday *and* the substitute day, only a single time additional payment for the public holiday. My interpretation of the AIRC findings is that somebody working both days should receive the public holiday shift loading, whether they are full-time or part-time. I would be interested in your interpretation of this matter, as I believe some part-time workers may have been underpaid.

The next point that has come to light is that no shift penalty (other than ‘ordinary’ afternoon or night shift penalties) is paid for someone who is rostered *off* for the *public holiday*, and rostered *on* for the *substitute day*. Even though this reflects the AIRC findings, what emerges is that people who are working the substitute day are actually worse off under this system than they were before this variation took place, as they now receive only a single-time payment for the public holiday (the Saturday in this case) instead of their public holiday shift loading. This does not, at least by my interpretation, reflect the intent of the award clause variation.

There may yet be other issues that I am as yet not aware of, but these are the issues I am aware of thus far. Please feel free to contact myself or Len if further clarification is required.”

We are awaiting a response. This will be followed up, along with other matters.

AIR CONDITIONING – COLD AIR

A number of people are getting or have been made ill from the very cold air in some parts of the building.

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Management have reported that they have tried getting the maintenance company to test/change many things to solve the problem.

They also report that there are not many complaints being received from staff about the cold. CEPU has made it clear that the lack of complaints is probably due to staff not wanting to be constantly moved from position to position.

We have helped with successful workers compensation claims over the issue. If you have had time off and other costs to you as a result, then contact CEPU to assist you with claims.

If you are still suffering due to the air conditioning problem then please contact the CEPU. We will keep your name confidential.

The CEPU is now considering calling in WorkCover to try to ensure solutions to the problem. We have also suggested that Management consider changing the maintenance company.

COMPUTER UPGRADE – FONT PROBLEM

Following discussions ESTA Management has taken action to deal with the screen problems created by the recent computer system upgrade.

If members still experience difficulties they should contact the union with details.

POLICE CALL TAKER STARTUP – BALLARAT

We have been in discussion with Management of ESTA about the police call taker start-up and conditions at Ballarat. The following letter was sent to Management some time ago;

“We write to you concerning the traditional breaks for staff at the VPC. We touched on the subject at a meeting with you and other managers recently.

As you know the issues of retention of the traditional breaks for staff handling police work has been a key issue for staff and the CEPU in each EBA discussion both with ESTA and before that Intergraph.

The staff, virtually unanimously, see the half hour breaks as fundamental to their welfare in the high call numbers /high pressure area of the VPC. The CEPU is convinced that the staff are absolutely correct about this.

The issue is very much a fundamental issue of good health and safety practice and the CEPU cannot allow the situation to be changed or altered to the staff's detriment or potential detriment.

We write because of our concerns following our last meeting. It seems that ESTA is toying with the idea that the traditional police work breaks may not apply at the Ballarat site.

We have to point out to you that the CEPU could not support such an outcome should that be ESTA's intention.

It is our contention that police work and the special pressures associated with that, exist whether the work is performed in Melbourne or any other centre, and given that personnel are likely to be interchangeable between centres for various operational reasons, then we are putting it to ESTA formally, that the traditional breaks utilised in police work since the inception of the separate call taking and despatch began starting with Intergraph, be continued at the Ballarat centre.

It is our belief that it is unlikely that staff from the Melbourne Police Centre will agree to transfer to Ballarat without ESTA at least honouring the traditional breaks, and this could be a serious disadvantage to ESTA operations as clearly there is a need for experienced police based personnel at Ballarat. We also believe that for all intents and purposes, the police based work at Ballarat is basically VPC work being performed at a separate annex and therefore should be seen as such, thus applying all of the current arrangements and conditions that apply at the VPC.

We are writing to call on ESTA to ensure that the current VPC breaks will apply at least for police work at Ballarat. The CEPU seeks a formal response from ESTA on the issue as soon as possible. We are more than pleased to further discuss the issue should it be required.”

Several discussions have taken place between CEPU and Management, and although there has been some attempt to ease immediate problems being faced by new starters at Ballarat, as yet there has been little action to resolve the more fundamental problems.

The CEPU will escalate the issue to try to seek an acceptable solution.

FIRE DRILL VPC

We have been pressing for clearer rules and procedures, and proper training in regard to Fire Drill. We understand that the training has begun and eventually all staff will be involved.

We are following up the written procedures to help ensure that members and other staff are confident that they are being looked after and protected in the event of fire. Members will be kept informed.

DELAY IN PAYING – EXTRA LEAVE

Members will be aware that part of the current EBA enabled/required staff to be paid for the extra leave which arose from the 38hr week if the leave wasn't taken in the year concerned.

However, the required payment for those who are in that category from the 2006/07 year has been delayed and Management are looking at that problem, following CEPU representations. We will keep you informed.

NEXT SALARY INCREASE

The next salary increase arising from the current union Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) is 3% from the first pay period on or after the 1st July 2008. It should be paid shortly after that date. The trainer's allowance, the mentor's allowance, and the meal allowance will also be increased by 3% from 1st July 2008.

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CEPU – DON'T GO TO WORK WITHOUT US!