

S.The Signal

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■ **In this issue:**

1. Industrial Action Wide spread Impact
2. Why Do They Persist?
2. The Redundancy Agreement & Management Lies about it
3. How Grubby Can They Get?
3. A Great Fuss About How Many?
3. What Is Telstra Organising Here?
4. Member Welfare Fund

■ **Contact a CEPU**

Official: See page 4.

CEPU HEAT ALERT

Don't risk your health working outside in extreme heat.

Be alert for heat stress symptoms: e.g. High temperature, Dizziness, headache, and nausea. Rest, with fluids and shade.

Knock off when you believe it's necessary. Tell the manager.

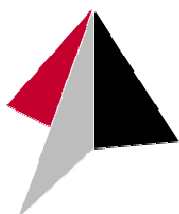
Any problems refer to CEPU.

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INDUSTRIAL ACTION WIDESPREAD IMPACT

Telstra's spin machine (they are masters of spin that no-one believes), is continually claiming in the media that the CEPU's industrial action is having "no effect" and "only 15% of the workforce is unionised" They obviously think that the public and workforce are as simple minded as their propaganda.

First of all whilst Telstra's unionisation figure is much understated, this diverts from the real issue. The real issue is that the workforce with the capacity to impact Telstra's daily operations, the Technical and Lines workforce etc, is 70% unionised, and they are the workforce, in the main, who are taking action.

Secondly, when this workforce takes action, they have a major impact because they are critical to Telstra's maintenance and provisioning effort. Does management believe that in normal times these employees are sitting about doing nothing, so that when they go out for 48 hours or more, there is no impact?

Let us look at what has happened so far.

The industrial action ballot, was carried by over 90% of voters, but because of the law, and other factors, we only had one week of action prior to the Xmas/New Year holidays. Despite that the following action was taken:

The Transmission area and other areas at the GOC were out for 48 hours or 52 hours, our ARGENT (EFTPOS & ATMs etc) members went out indefinitely, our Alice Springs members went out for 48 hours, construction members in NSW and Victoria for 48 hours, CBD members throughout Australia and GOC out for 4 hours with CPSU members, Call Centre members at Burwood and Bendigo out for 4 hours, Service Delivery members throughout Australia and all Tasmanian

members out for 48 hours and weekend bans on overtime, recalls and call backs.

Obviously we were unable to mount much action during the 3 weeks of the Xmas/New Year break, because many Telstra employees are off, and projects delayed. However the following additional action was, and is, being taken. We list it for information purposes, and to demonstrate the nonsense of Telstra's propaganda.

The action taken/being taken following the Xmas/New year break is as follows:

Apart from the weekend overtime and recall/call-back bans, 48 hours strikes have been taken in the Construction/Data and IP group (Sth Aust), Wireless Mobile Ops Network Field Group throughout Australia, Media Services throughout Australia, Next Generation Ops and Enhanced Ops groups throughout Australia, 48 hour strikes of various groups at the GOC (Mobiles, DVOC, HFC Networks etc) and 48 and 24 hour strikes by various groups in the Central Business District including further action by our ARGENT members (currently out for 48 hours) and Enhanced Services for 24 hours.

Some of the impact of the above is as follows:

- *At least 3 weeks of delays in tickets of work, i.e. in maintenance (services) and installation (provisioning).*
- *At least 3 separate delays to the banks being cut over under Telstra's new transformation project.*
- *Major failures in the EFTPOS/ATM services, particularly in New South Wales and Victoria. At one stage one third of the EFTPOS/ATM network was down. Ongoing problems for some banks.*
- *Shut down of mobile alarm indicators at the Global Opera-*

tions Centre because it showed overload of faults due to lack of capability to undertake the repairs. Telstra has been forced to downgrade the alarm status of faults to make them appear less important. For example, where up to 500 PSTN customers are off the air arising from a failure, this is now classified as non urgent.

- Major transmission failures in Victoria and New South Wales, e.g. 2 Megabit links under the DDN network have failed. Austpac has failed.
- Major failures in the mobiles network in Queensland.
- Major NAB outage.
- Major failures in the mobiles network in Victoria.
- Major failures in the Service Delivery area in Adelaide which has led to a backup of faults such that there are now 6 times the delays in repairs.

We have aimed at limiting the action so far, by short duration stoppages, and bans and limitations, to try to convince management to change course and bargain for a decent EBA for employees. Clearly those in management ranks with a genuine concern for the company, its customers and its employees, are not yet on top in the internal factional battles over the direction of the company.

We are now in the process of stepping up the action into longer strikes and bans more closely grouped together in key areas of the business. Let it be understood that the blame is completely on the heads of Telstra's stubborn failure to negotiate as any reasonable, sensible management would.

WHY DO THEY PERSIST? ANSWER: IT'S CALLED ECAS.

You might wonder why Telstra management persist with their

"we won't talk", the union action is having no impact" and "after the 31st of January the money offer will reduce" type propaganda.

The answer is simple. If non union employees continued to believe that the union members' action will deliver a good outcome then no one would sign up to Telstra's third rate non-negotiated, non-union ECA would they?

Telstra management know time is running out for their flawed de-unionisation strategy. They know the impact of the CEPU members industrial action is accumulating and that ongoing industrial disruption will be impossible to live with for long.

Telstra management also know that time is running out because the Labor Government's new laws are currently being debated in parliament, and when those laws are in force, they will be required to bargain in good faith.

While we are on the subject of management's ECAs we again remind you of the major serious problems they will present for employees if they are implemented:

- *no right to arbitration in disputes. Telstra is the judge, jury, executioner*
- *the mechanisms are set up to reduce your banding levels*
- *the mechanisms are set up to change your hours of work, the days you work in a week, and your daily span of hours*
- *the redundancy agreement protective clauses have been gutted*
- *there is no regulation to make performance management and performance pay fair to employees*
- *you are denied the right to a union negotiated agreement*

- *in a non-union agreement the union's capacity to represent you is limited*
- *the Part B conditions in the ECA mean that new employees will be on much lower wages, and employees coming off AWAs are denied the right to Part A*
- *the cheaper labour force in Part B will be used to push the more expensive Part A employees out of the business*

On the question of money: The salary offer of a 4.5%, 4%, and 4% over 3 years. For example the 4.5% for the first year, given that we haven't had a pay increase for 16 months, and given that over much of that period cost of living increases skyrocketed, is inadequate for members and their families who have fallen well behind. And in particular, the company is applying double standards of outrageous proportions; Trujillo and most of his senior managers received increases of 14% plus over that period. The company's money offer is inadequate.

THE REDUNDANCY AGREEMENT AND MANAGEMENT'S LIES ABOUT IT

Two barefaced lies being told by Telstra Managers about the redundancy agreement need to again be exposed.

At the outset we should remind everyone that the redundancy agreement was won by union action, against Telstra management resistance in the late 1980s. Management has been trying ever since to change it or scrap it completely.

In their desperate attempts to "sell" their unacceptable ECA, they are giving the impression that they have protected the redundancy agreement in the ECA, and they hope employees won't see through their nonsense.

The fact is that many of the protective clauses in the current redundancy agreement, clauses that help protect you against unfair selection, unfair ratings and unfair refusal to accept volunteers and agree to swaps, have been left out of the ECA. They have wanted to achieve this for years.

Even worse, Telstra managers, in many parts of the business, are lying through their teeth by stating, and continuing to state, that if you don't pick up the ECA, you will lose the redundancy agreement altogether because it will be scrapped automatically by law in March 2009.

It was WorkChoices that contained the "drop dead" clause for the redundancy agreement by March 2009. It was the CEPU's lobbying as soon as the new Labor Government was elected, that led to the Government legislating in April 2008 to remove the "drop dead" clause. As a result the redundancy agreement runs on until the parties (union and Telstra) change it. Of course, as mentioned earlier, if you vote for an ECA in your work area, then you lose access to most of the protective mechanisms in the redundancy agreement.

There is clearly no end to what many of these so called managers will say and do to get you onto their third rate ECA.

HOW GRUBBY CAN THEY GET?

Many CEPU members have certainly experienced the real nastiness of corporate management culture, during the current industrial dispute, in the unlikely event that they haven't experienced it before.

Most employees found that within three or four days of taking industrial action, the money had been deducted from their pay packets. Everyone has said you just try and get them to pay what they

owe you or pay your overtime in such a short turn around time.

No one is complaining about being docked, but the double standards show just how nasty management is. Particularly those who were docked so quickly in the run up to Xmas, and particularly when you consider that management have caused the dispute by continually refusing to negotiate like normal, sensible managers should.

No wonder Telstra employees are getting angrier and angrier with a corporate management that can't be trusted and can't be believed.

A GREAT FUSS ABOUT HOW MANY?

The number of staff in some areas who supposedly voted for an ECA is very revealing.

Southern Unity (Melb)	8
One Adelaide	7
Impact Burwood	20
Zephyr Darwin	4
Bigpond Bathurst	3

What is this company management on about?

It is also important to know that employees in E000 and Disability Enquiry Hotline, the IT area and NDS Network programmes voted against the ECA recently.

ECAs – WHAT IS TELSTRA ORGANISING HERE?

Telstra has been trying for over 12 months to get its employees to support its so-called Employee Collective Agreement (ECA).

It has expended enormous effort. Its entire management structure has been engaged and huge amounts of money have been expended to get about 200 employees (so far) on to its ECA lemon. Why?

Because they are desperate to get the Part A/Part B non-union ECA up, so that it can implement its plan to cut employee pay and

conditions (See union's leaflet and other info on "What's Wrong With The ECA?").

How desperate are they?

Are they desperate enough, given their massive effort with so little success so far, that they would stretch and bend the system to get their ECAs up?

Let's look at the facts so far:

- * They have constantly refused to let the union or other employees have scrutineers of their ECA ballots, despite the fact that having scrutineers is a normal part of "clean ballot" practice in Australia.
- * They have constantly refused to publish the results of their ECA ballots (e.g. numbers who voted, numbers who voted yes/no, the numbers of informal votes etc), despite the fact that publishing this information is a normal part of "clean ballot" practice in Australia.
- * They have consistently used commercial agency type arrangements to run the ballot, so that rather than an independent government agency controlling the ballot process, Telstra controls the ballot because they are the paying client.
- * Some employees have been placed on an ECA despite the fact that they were not given the opportunity to vote. After the union highlighted the issue, these employees were removed because of what Telstra described as an "administrative error". How many other "administration errors" have there been?
- * Most ECA ballots have been conducted "on line" with no voter knowledge of the ballot security and integrity, and no voter knowledge of protections against multiple voting etc.

There are no allowances for the fact that many employees still do not have day-to-day online capability or practice, and employees are only given less than 48 hours to vote, in some cases.

- * Some employees, who have been caught up in an ECA ballot, are very angry because they didn't want an ECA and they voted against it. Sometimes whole work centres have voted against it, but they are still on an ECA at the end of it.

They have no say in who is in scope and who is not, they have no chance to debate the for and against with others in scope, and no opportunities which would normally be considered as part of a democratic process. These employees are in fact forced into an ECA, despite the fact that they want a union- negotiated EBA.

- * In at least one instance (Service Plus, Perth), after employees in Perth and Brisbane (Service Plus, Call Centric), voted against the ECA, only weeks later the Brisbane Call Centric staff were dropped out of the equation, and another ECA ballot was implemented at Perth Call Centric only.

In those few weeks, in order to get the ballot up, Telstra Management applied absolutely relentless pressure on those who voted no originally in Perth Call Centric, and even then they only got the ballot up by the narrowest of margins.

- * Telstra Management, in calling for earlier "expressions of interest" in their ECA, required employees to indicate whether they would vote yes, no, or maybe. Whatever happened to the principle of secret ballots? This is another

democratic principle that Telstra has trashed.

- * To top it all off, how is it acceptable that a group of employees, (possibly a small group because there is no 50+ voting requirement to get a vote up), can decide on a set of inferior working conditions for future employees (Part B of the ECA), who get absolutely no say in it?

How is such behaviour tolerated by the system governing ECAs? If such behaviour is tolerated by the Act, how bad are the Work-Choices laws that Telstra Management love so much? What sort of shonk is this?

MEMBER WELFARE FUND

The CEPU has established a welfare fund to assist members who may be in financial difficulties for various reasons.

The fund could be of some value in times of industrial action, such as that which exists in Telstra at present, and beyond the industrial action, as economic times become more difficult.

The fund will be built on donations from members, and others, including the union itself. In that regard in a small effort the CEPU officials will pay two days pay into the fund to match the losses of some members in the recent industrial action. This will start the fund off.

Members who are suffering hardship should contact the fund for assistance.

The welfare fund will be an ongoing institution as a service to members in these difficult times and beyond. Contact Sharon Benson 9347 8388 if you have any enquiry re payment to the fund. Donation details are:

- * **Direct debit through your financial institution or EFT** to:
CEPU Welfare Fund. BSB: 063262 Ac No: 10454772

- * **Cheque or money order** made out to CEPU Welfare Fund and posted to:
CEPU Welfare Fund, 1/139 Queensberry Street, Carlton South 3053.
- * **Credit Card** over the phone to the Branch – 03 9349 4411
- * **There is no BPAY facility at this stage**

As you know some of our members have been taking strike and other action to help win a new good quality EBA for all Telstra employees. Obviously, there will be considerable hardship experienced by some of these members.

We would recommend, where you can afford it, that you donate a minimum of \$10 per week into the Welfare Fund whilst the dispute over our EBA lasts.

Where you can't afford that amount, please give what you can. If you can afford more than that will be a great help for our struggling members.

The Welfare Fund will, by decision of your elected union Committee of Management, be audited at the same time as the annual Branch Financial Report after 31st March 2009, (end of financial year).

To Apply To Claim On The Fund

If you wish to make a claim to help with any hardship being experienced, please contact JOHN ELLERY Branch Assistant Secretary, in the first instance: 0419 823 580 or 9545 1503 (Clayton office)

LEN COOPER Branch Secretary

■ **Contact a CEPU Official:**
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JOHN ELLERY 0419 823 580
WOODY 9349 4411
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