

# S.The Signal

Issue No. 596  
26 May 2010

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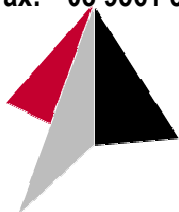
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## CEPU MEMBERS CONSULTATIVE SURVEY

CEPU members on the EBA, expired AWAs and ITEAs will receive a ballot paper and other information this week to enable a collective view of our members on Telstra's EBA offer.

The outcome will guide CEPU negotiators as to whether to accept Telstra's offer or continue to fight for a better deal.

**This is not a formal ballot to accept or reject a negotiated draft EBA. When we reach such an outcome the ballot will involve all employees eligible to vote, not just union members.**

The Divisional Executive is recommending a NO vote, but it is important you make your own judgement following the "For" or "Against" cases that you will receive with the ballot paper.

**Members need to have their vote in by 12 noon on Friday 11 June.**

**If members do not receive a ballot paper and believe they are entitled to vote they should contact the Branch office on 9349 4411.**

## ANNIVERSARY CEO TALKS UP TELSTRA BUT PAY DIFFERENTIAL REMAINS

While Telstra has said that their latest EA pay offer is their final one, EA employees in the company are now and will, under this offer, continue to be thousands of dollars behind employees on ECAs.

**This is a company that every year announces a profit of around \$4 billion. Last year its profit was over \$4.1 billion – a near record.**

At the same time the company tells the EA-based workers they cannot afford to pay them the same as ECA employees because of the Global Financial Crisis.

This same company paid \$40 million to a non-performing CEO

and in 2009 paid \$1 million in retention fees to a current Senior Executive Manager.

Now the cat is out of the bag with respect to Telstra's double standards.

In a wide-ranging interview with *The Australian* following his first anniversary as CEO, David Thodey said that:

**"We are not seeing anything negative from the economy. The last six months have seen pretty good consumer spending, a pickup in SME business and good activity all around, in part driven by the fact that we have released a series of new products."**

So where's the rationale for Telstra continuing to play Scrooge with its EA employees?

## CEPU CONDEMNS TELSTRA JOB CUTS

**The CEPU has reacted sharply to Telstra's latest indications that it plans to cut some 900 jobs from its operations in the coming financial year.**

The union was briefed by Telstra on the proposed cuts on 27 April but no details as to where and when they were likely to occur was provided.

Communications Division President Len Cooper slammed the future cuts which he claimed will severely affect the level of service to the customer.

**"Last October the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman reported a 54% increase in complaints and between July and December 2009. Telstra topped the grievance list with 58,597 complaints", Mr. Cooper said.**

The CEPU has long argued that Telstra policies linked to staff cuts, contracting out and skills shortages have led to decline in customer service standards. It has presented evidence before a number of inquiries on the deterioration of the fixed network,

including the many plastic bagged, plastic wrapped and ring barked joints that can be found in all parts of the country and the related rise of fault levels, especially in wet weather.

### **CEPU WANTS DIRECT EMPLOYMENT IN NBN**

**The announcement by NBN Co that seven separate contracting companies will be used for its mainland trials has prompted warnings by the CEPU that quality may be sacrificed to speed in the national roll-out.**

National President, Ed Husic, said that this decision, together with NBN Co's earlier release of a Request for Capability Statement, signalled a reliance on contractors which would potentially undermine the project and fail to build a significant skill base within the company itself.

"NBN Co seems fixated on the old-school model of bringing in low-cost contractors that are geared more to "value for money" – which is code for lower wages and conditions – than building an employment proposition that will attract good skills and talent in an environment that is not awash with them due to skill shortages," he said.

**"I think that there has to be some thinking within NBN Co that to attract people, they need to provide security of employment and solid, rewarding conditions that from our experience have not always been on offer from contractors."**

He said that the CEPU was also concerned that the single largest telecommunications skill base in Australia – that represented by the Telstra workforce – might be locked out of the project in favour of contractors, even if an agreement with Telstra about the terms of its engagement with NBN Co was reached.

**"NBN Co is undermining the ability of Telstra employees to have a role in the build," he said. "If NBN Co locks up the job by bringing in all these contractors, then say a deal is reached, the physical assets could go over but the labour assets could be left stranded."**

The CEPU will be pursuing these questions with NBN Co in the coming weeks.

### **ABBOTT IS TRYING TO MISLEAD VOTERS AND REWRITE THE HISTORY OF WORKCHOICES**

Tony Abbott and the Liberal Party are being selective about the history of WorkChoices in an attempt to mislead voters.

**In a recent radio interview, Mr Abbott claimed there was only one "fundamental problem" with WorkChoices and that it had been fixed by the former Howard Government.**

This follows Liberal powerbroker Nick Minchin's admission that WorkChoices was not flawed, just unpopular with voters.

ACTU President Sharan Burrow said Mr Abbott's claim that WorkChoices was "better" after the restoration of the so-called Fairness Test was a complete whitewash and an attempt to rewrite history.

**The 'Fairness Test' was put in place only after the Liberal Party realised that WorkChoices was electoral poison," Ms Burrow said. "But the Howard Government left the rest of WorkChoices completely intact."**

"The Coalition did nothing to protect workers from unfair dismissal. It retained individual contracts that allowed employers to dictate pay and conditions to teenagers and other vulnerable workers. It embraced discriminatory and unfair laws that put barriers in the way of workers

bargaining collectively or being represented by a union."

**"The truth is WorkChoices cut the real wages of well over a million low-paid workers by as much as \$97.75 because of changes to the way minimum wages were set."**

"For Tony Abbott to go on radio and claim that WorkChoices was somehow good for working Australians and the economy is a great con, and it just shows he can't be trusted."

**"Tony Abbott is on the record as promising to bring back key elements of WorkChoices by cutting unfair dismissal protections for workers and reintroducing AWA-style individual contracts."**

"In recent days Tony Abbott has sided with big mining companies who were the loudest cheerleaders of WorkChoices in vowing to block improvements to the superannuation of all Australians."

**"In their hearts, the Liberals and Tony Abbott remain as committed to hardline industrial relations policies as they were in the WorkChoices days. They just won't call it that."**

### **UNIONS WELCOME LABOR'S SUPERANNUATION BOOST**

**The Australian union movement has welcomed superannuation changes announced by the Federal Government in its response to the Henry Tax Review.**

The ACTU says that millions of working Australians will enjoy higher living standards in retirement as a result of the decision to lift employer superannuation contributions from the current 9% to 12% by 1 July 2019.

ACTU Secretary Jeff Lawrence says that the economy will also benefit from the changes with a

projected \$85 billion to be added to national savings over the next 10 years, helping to fund jobs and infrastructure.

“The lift in the Superannuation Guarantee and a new Government contribution to low paid workers’ superannuation accounts are big wins for working Australians and unions,” said Mr Lawrence.

**“The new measures will deliver an extra \$108,000 in retirement for a 30 year old who today earns average full time wages.”**

“They are a major step towards making the labour movement’s dream of a more comfortable retirement for all working Australians a reality.”

**“The lift in the superannuation guarantee and the improvements to tax concessions for low income workers are major planks that build on the deal made with working Australians and unions almost two decades ago to establish universal superannuation.”**

### **WORKERS TURN TO UNIONS FOR BETTER PAY: NEW ABS DATA SHOWS LIFT IN UNION MEMBERSHIP**

A lift in union membership in the past year shows working Australians are turning to unions to improve their pay and conditions.

New ABS data released today shows there has been a lift in union membership of more than 82,000 workers and the proportion of the workforce in unions has increased from 19% to 20%.

**The data shows there are 1.9 million Australians that are members of a union and that union members earn, on average, \$145 a week more than non-members.**

There has been a rise in union membership density in both the

public and private sectors with the strongest gains among male full time workers.

**The average union member now earns \$145 a week more than the average worker who is not in a union.**

Overall this is a great result for unions given the Global Financial Crisis.

It shows the underlying strength of the economy and the success of unions in bargaining and campaigning for growth.

**CEPU MEMBERS RALLY Although it is balloting members about Telstra’s latest EA offer, the CEPU has not suspended its EA campaign.**

In addition to ongoing industrial action (start-of-day and end-of-day field procedures are having a major impact), the CEPU has ramped up its corporate campaign activity across Australia and stoppages in key areas are continuing.

This includes providing leaflets to Telstra customers, lobbying of MPs and sending postcards to Telstra CEO David Thodey. (Extra postcards are available from the branch office 9349 4411)

**Membership rallies were held in Melbourne - May 5 and Brisbane - May 20, where CEPU officials addressed the crowd. South Australia’s rally is this Friday (May 28th).**

Members have expressed their disgust at the \$1 million retention payment paid to Telstra’s Chief Operations Officer in each of the last two years.

**They also contrasted the CEO’s recent comments in the press regarding the strength of the Australian economy with the lame excuse Telstra is giving for not paying EA employees the 2.5% “sign-on bonus” as salary because of the Global Financial Crisis.**

### **BRITISH TELECOM WORKERS MAY STRIKE OVER PAY**

It’s the same the whole world over.

**Employees at British Telecom, the UK’s former monopoly provider, are contemplating industrial action over the company’s refusal to improve its latest pay offer.**

After being hit by a wave of redundancies during the Global Financial Crisis and a wage freeze for the last two years, BT’s workforce is now looking to share in the company’s recently improved financial position.

**BT made a profit of over £1 billion over the financial year just ended. But the company is offering a pay rise of only 2% this year.**

Communications Workers Union deputy general secretary, Andy Kerr said:

"As we can all see from its financial results, BT is a successful company making significant profits. This is welcome to everyone at BT."

**“We want the company to reward their hard working staff members who have shown unprecedented loyalty during a difficult few years.”**

**“BT is now abusing that goodwill by refusing to make a decent pay offer this year.”**

**"With inflation running at 4.4 per cent, shareholders getting a 6 per cent dividend rise and the company's profits restored to health the offer of 2 per cent on pay is an insult."**

Sound familiar?

**LEN COOPER**  
**Branch Secretary**