

S.The Signal

Issue No. 597
24 June 2010

■ In this issue:

1. CEPU Members Say "NO" To Telstra's Offer
1. Survey Tells Telstra Some Home Truths
2. Network Construction Staff Send Message To Telstra
2. Travel Allowance Warning
3. Penalties Against Optus "Weak" Says Consumer Group
3. Behind The iPhone: Labour Conditions In China
4. Terrorism Less deadly In US Than Lack Of Health Ins, Salmonella
4. 2009/2010 Tax Rates Union Dues: Telstra & Aust Post

■ Contact a CEPU Official:

LEN COOPER
Branch Secretary
0438 389 302

JOHN ELLERY
Assist Secretary
0419 823 580

SUE RILEY
CSO Call Centres
0439 762 455

**COMMUNICATIONS
UNION (CEPU)**

Main Office

1/139 Queensberry Street
Carlton South 3053

Ph: 03 9349 4411

Fax : 03 9349 3488

Email

cdtsvic@victs.cepu.asn.au

Clayton Office

47 Henderson Rd
Clayton 3168

Ph: 03 9545 1503

Fax: 03 9561 5599



CEPU MEMBERS SAY "NO" ON TELSTRA EA OFFER

The Consultative Survey ballot conducted by the CEPU to determine if members were in favour of the proposed Telstra Enterprise Agreement concluded on Friday 11th June 2010.

After receiving advice from the Returning Officers for each Branch, the CEPU can now announce that 54.19% of formal votes received voted against acceptance of the proposed Agreement in line with the Divisional Executive recommendation.

The vote is in line with the consistent feedback the CEPU has received from its members as to the pay offer contained in the proposed EA.

In the union's view, even members who may be prepared to accept the EA believe this aspect of the offer is unfair and that EA pay rates should be matched with those of ECA-based employees.

Members clearly consider Telstra's position on this matter to be discriminatory and punitive. It indeed must be seen in the context of the company's history of anti-union behaviour including offering financial incentives to employees to move onto non-union negotiated instruments such as AWAs and ECAs.

In the CEPU's view, Telstra management recognises that the greatest obstacle to this industrial agenda is the unity and organisation of their workforce. As reported elsewhere in this Signal, Telstra staff remain strongly critical of the company's approach to its employees and their legitimate claims.

In fact a recent internal survey showed that employees thought that Telstra's internal management skills were rubbish!

But surveys are only one way of getting the message across. The

EA ballot outcome is an important step in taking such healthy criticism to a higher plane.

The CEPU is holding national link-ups of all state branches to discuss the ballot outcome and to finalise steps arising from it. These will include considerations of ongoing industrial action, legal options and corporate campaigning.

SURVEY TELLS TELSTRA SOME HOME TRUTHS

A recent market survey conducted by Telstra found that 50% of respondents "hated" the company.

And while an in-house poll of Telstra employees identified some positives about working for the telco, those same workers said that Telstra was "rubbish when it came to people management".

These results may not surprise Signal readers but they posed something of a challenge for Telstra's Human Resources team according to resourcing manager Josephine Thompson.

Ms Thompson has had the job of developing an Employment Value Proposition (EVP) for Telstra – a kind of "mission statement" that identifies the reasons people would want to work for the company.

Speaking at an Australasian Talent Conference earlier this month, Ms. Thompson told delegates that the survey results presented her with a problem. There clearly was a "significant gap" between Telstra and its employees. And while she had the responsibility for designing the EVP she had no control over the management practices that were alienating people both inside and outside the company.

Telstra has since developed an EVP centred around the slogan "Connect with what you love" and is running ads featuring 77 happy employees who have been

appointed to act as “brand ambassadors”.

But Ms. Thompson warns all this is no good if there is still a yawning gulf between image and reality. The challenge, she says, is to ensure that HR is “delivering” by “lifting the standard of the company’s people management.”

Who could disagree? Meanwhile, the CEPU would be happy to save Telstra management the costs of further surveys if it wants to understand the “significant gap” between itself and its employees.

NETWORK CONSTRUCTION STAFF SEND MESSAGE TO TELSTRA

Network Construction staff have told Telstra that it is not delivering in key areas.

The 2010 EES Pulse Survey, sent to 470 Network Construction employees, asked staff to rate Telstra’s performance against seven indicators relating to both employee relations (e.g. “Develop Capability”, “Innovate Together”) and business effectiveness (e.g. “Compete to win”, “Customer First”, “Strategic Leadership”.

Staff marked Telstra down, compared to the 2008 ratings, on six of the seven measures. Interestingly, the biggest drops were in “Strategic Leadership” and “Results Delivery”.

Evidently Network Construction staff do not think the business is travelling too well in the current uncertain industry environment.

And with good reason. As Telstra itself admits in a memo to NDC staff, there is “some degree of concern in relation to Telstra’s participation in the NBN” and about Telstra’s strategic direction more generally.

But then there are also the unresolved Enterprise Agreement negotiations which “have been

weighing on the minds of those employees who are directly impacted.”

Indeed. Perhaps if that weight were removed through an EA settlement which offered a fair wage outcome the next EES Survey would produce more encouraging results.

TRAVEL ALLOWANCE WARNING

An incident in Victoria has highlighted the need for Telstra employees to be aware of the conditions governing the payment of Travel Allowance (TA).

TA is only paid by Telstra if staff actually stay overnight at a temporary location. In the Victorian case, which involved Network Construction staff, employees were found not to have stayed at the temporary location overnight. As a result, severe disciplinary action was taken against them.

In some states, Telstra is currently offering TA to regionally-based staff to travel to metropolitan areas to fulfil the new weekend customer service commitments. Members must be clear that these TA payments are conditional on staff actually staying in the metropolitan locations for the period TA is being paid.

PENALTIES AGAINST OPTUS “WEAK” SAYS CONSUMER GROUP

The competition regulator should be seeking stronger penalties against SingTel Optus for misleading advertising according to communications consumer advocates.

The comments come as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) seeks an injunction against Optus over aspects of its promotion of its broadband, mobile and fixed telephony services.

The ACCC alleges that Optus has breached the Trade Practices Act by advertising “unlimited” usage of the services for a certain price when in fact a number of limitations on use applied.

The head of the Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN), Allan Asher said that that simply seeking an injunction against further misleading advertising was a “weak” response to the problem.

He said the ACCC should be asking for an order that provided compensation to any consumer who had suffered loss or damage from the behaviour.

BEHIND THE IPHONE: LABOUR CONDITIONS IN CHINA

On 7 June, Apple’s Chief Executive Steve Jobs unveiled the much-anticipated iPhone 4, a slimmer, high resolution version of the smartphone with a front-facing camera for video calls, a longer battery life and up to 35 Gigabits of storage.

What Jobs did not reveal, however, was the conditions faced by those at the centre of iPhone manufacturing – the workers at the giant Foxconn plant in China.

Foxconn, which is Taiwanese-owned but China-based, has recently been the site of a wave of suicides by its employees. Conditions in the company have been cited as the cause of the deaths.

Jobs appears to be in denial about these issues.

“It is a factory,” he said recently. “But my gosh, they have restaurants and movie theatres and hospitals and swimming pools. For a factory, it is pretty nice.”

In truth, however, Foxconn is a huge sweatshop – a city in itself, employing 400,000 people in conditions that resemble a military camp. Employees, drawn

largely from poor rural back-grounds, work exhaustingly long hours for meagre wages.

Last month a 27 year old engineer at the plant, Yan Li, collapsed and died after having worked continuously for 34 hours. His wife said Yan had been on the night

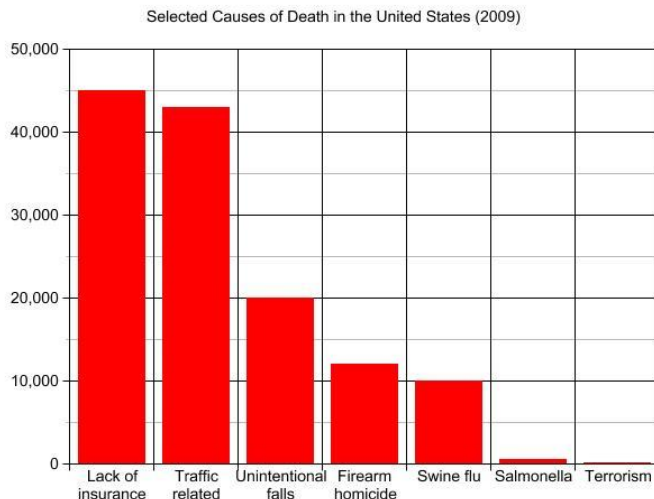
shift for a month and in that time had worked overtime every night.

Foxconn has since moved to de-fuse criticism of its operations by raising wages at the plant by nearly 70% - a figure that itself gives some insight into how low wages must have been before and

why so much overtime was being worked.

But labour rights activists are now pointing out that even the 70% wage rise may not bring Foxconn workers' pay up to the level of the new minimum wage for Shenzhen, the province in which the factory is based.

TERRORISM STILL LESS DEADLY IN THE USA THAN LACK OF HEALTH INSURANCE, SALMONELLA



Earlier this year the media was having a freak-out over some loser who got on a plane with a bomb in his underwear, which was apparently worthy of a presidential address. It might be a good idea to put the actual danger posed by terrorist attacks in some numerical perspective.

If you count the Ft. Hood shooting as a terrorist attack, 16 people have died in the United States as result of terrorism in 2009. The other three deaths include the Little Rock military recruiting office shooting (1), the Holocaust Museum shooting (1), and Dr. George Tiller's assassination (1), the last two coming at the hands of right-wing extremists.

On the other hand, 45,000 Americans died because they didn't have health insurance and 600 died from salmonella poisoning. The table above tells the story.

FOR EXPERT TAXATION PREPARATION & ADVICE Call: 9819 7255

ProAcct Advisors & Accountants Pty Ltd: Ask for Silvio Crisafi. He is the union endorsed taxation consultant servicing union members for over 25 years

UNION DUES 2009/10 (Taxation) TELSTRA/AUST POST

Category A \$514.80 Based on salary \$64,798 & above
Category B \$468.00 Based on salary = \$52,522 but less than \$64,798
Category C \$374.40 Based on salary = \$37,147 but less than \$52,522
Category D \$187.20 Based on salary less than \$37,147

■ **FINANCIAL SERVICES:**

Bill Harding & Associates Pty Ltd 9738 1244.

ProAcct Advisors & Accts: 9880 9600 – Silvio Crisafi

Australian National Financial Planning: 9615 0675. (Branches all over) Website: www.australiannfp.com

■ **HOME LOANS & LOW COST BANKING:**

MembersEquity, 13 15 63 Website: www.membersequitybank.com.au

Credit Union Australia 132 282 Website: www.cua.com.au.

LEN COOPER
Branch Secretary