

# Special Signal

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■ **Contact a CEPU Official:**

**LEN COOPER**  
Branch Secretary  
0438 389 302

**JOHN ELLERY**  
Assist Secretary  
0419 823 580

**WOODY**  
Member Service Officer  
Ph. 9349 4411

**SUE RILEY**  
CSO Call Centres  
0439 762 455

**GREG CABANOS**  
CSO – Contractors  
0415 154 352

**COMMUNICATIONS  
UNION (CEPU)**

**Telecommunications And  
Services Branch Victoria**

1/139 Queensberry Street  
Carlton South 3053

Ph: 03 9349 4411

Fx: 03 9349 3488

Email

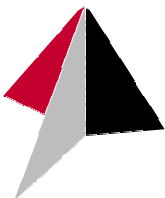
[cdtsvic@victs.cepu.asn.au](mailto:cdtsvic@victs.cepu.asn.au)

**Clayton Office**

47 Henderson Rd  
Clayton 3168

Ph: 03 9545 1503 or 9545 1516

Fx: 03 9561 5599



## EBA or ECA – Here They Go Again

Telstra's Management, once again trying to flog its "dead horse" non-union, non-negotiated collective agreement, is engaging in misleading information.

We correct some of it below:

### They say, Register Your Interest To Get A Vote

Their "clever" wording gives the impression that if you don't put in an expression of interest, then you may not get a vote on the ECA.

Telstra is required by law to give everyone in the catchment area (this is everyone on the EBA and everyone on an expired AWA in the catchment areas) a vote to decide on the ECA. You don't need to put in an "expression of interest" to get a vote.

**Telstra wants "expressions of interest" to decide whether to proceed with a vote. They don't want to get knocked off yet again.**

### They say, The Economic Downturn Means You Should Pick Up Telstra's Offer now and run while you can.

**This is utter nonsense.**

Firstly, Telstra's "offer" of 4.5%, 4% and 4% is clearly a pay cut in real terms in the first year and likely to be a pay cut in the second and third years also.

The cost of living increase at present is 5.7% for a "basket of goods" and 7.2% for a "basket of services" and rising (Bureau of Statistics).

**Apart from this don't you deserve some benefit for the huge productivity and profitability the company has enjoyed from your efforts?**

The Executive Managers paid themselves from 14% (and more) in increases in the last year, so there is no problem of a real pay cut for them is there?

The economy, moves into a downturn, or recession, or depression, because the purchasing power of the majority falls, due to reductions in real wages, unemployment and reductions in Government spending or all three.

The Prime Minister has recently (correctly) announced a large spending programme which puts money into peoples pockets quickly, and

spends on infrastructure for the very purpose of increasing the peoples purchasing power, to increase demand and re-build the economy and stop it moving into recession or worse. Money in Telstra employees pockets is part of the solution, not the problem.

It just so happens of course that Telstra's economic quackery is aimed at keeping your wages down, increasing Telstra's profits and leaving the phenomenal remuneration of the senior managers (and their increases many times the cost of living) untouched.

Why would they expect anyone to buy this deceptive nonsense?

### **They say, They are Protecting Your Redundancy Entitlements**

**No they are not.**

They are prepared (at present) to offer the same redundancy payout as the current union negotiated redundancy agreement (they won't get a vote up without it), but they have removed most of the protective mechanisms in the redundancy agreement, including the right to take unfair treatment relating to redundancy to the Arbitration Commission for binding decision.

### **They say, You can bring the union into represent you on a redundancy appeal.**

**This is a con.**

The "appeal" they are talking about is an internal appeal to Management. The usual Ceasar appealing to Ceasar Telstra style of so-called "fair treatment".

What they are **NOT** telling you about their non-union "agreement" is also misleading.

- \* Telstra is refusing to allow you to have the Arbitration Commission available for settling disputes – they will be the judge, jury and executioner. The disputes clause contains no binding arbitration.
- \* Telstra totally controls the performance management system and performance pay system, and do and will continue to use it to your disadvantage with no checks and balances. It must be regulated.
- \* Telstra will use the facilitative clauses to change your hours of duty, your span of hours and your days in the week and there will be no checks and balances.
- \* Once adopted the ECA would be used to manipulate major downgrades of positions across the board, without any recourse for employees. This has already begun. Compulsory arbitration is required.
- \* The Part A and Part B model guarantees that the more expensive Part A employees will be managed out of the business, in favour of the cheaper Part B employees.
- \* In a non-union agreement the constraints against effective union representation and involvement are considerable.
- \* At the end of three years, they have no requirement to even consult the union for your next agreement. It will be take it or leave it and you cop whatever they want to do.

Due to your pressure and continued rejection of their 3<sup>rd</sup> rate, non-union ECA, they have made some changes at the margins of the original offer. The essentials haven't changed. Its still 3<sup>rd</sup> rate and dangerous to employee interests well into the future.

**Tell them again that you want a union negotiated agreement.**

In the meantime the union is preparing for an industrial action ballot of all members, to win the good quality EBA that you deserve.

### **TELSTRA'S UNIONISED WORKERS ARE FIGHTING FOR YOU TO!**

You don't have to go far these days to hear negative things being said about unions. Many politicians, employers and people in the media openly criticise the unions. They say that unions are out of touch and out of date; they are dinosaurs. Yet despite all these criticisms and complaints, of the approximately 10.1 million workers in Australia nearly 2 million Australian workers proudly call themselves union members.

The truth is that these unionised workers protect the rights at work of ALL Australian workers whether they are union members or not, because it is the EBA that underpins your wages and conditions no matter how you are employed. Even if you are on an AWA, if you are a casual, if you are on a common law contract your conditions were won by the union members that you work with.

- **Most Australian workers still work under a union negotiated enterprise agreement or an award.**
- **It is union members in Telstra that protect YOU!**
- **It is union members who fought for the wages and conditions that YOU work under today because Telstra cannot pay you less than the EBA rates.**
- **It is union members who are again taking up this fight for YOU in this Telstra EBA 2008.**

#### **Why do so many people choose to belong to unions?**

The truth is that Australian workers & their unions have an exceptional track record when it comes to improving wages and conditions for working people. The union advantage is clear to see. The biggest thing that separates union from non-union workplaces is the collective agreement. In non-union workplaces, employees are often at the mercy of managers who play favourites and change terms and conditions of employment on a whim. But in a unionised environment, workers have written and legally-binding guarantees covering things like wage and conditions. Union members have fought for so many things that all Australian workers benefit from, too many things to mention here. The obvious ones are paid sick and annual leave, superannuation, maternity leave and penalty rates. None of these things were gifts from kindly employers, they were hard fought for by the union members working beside you.

#### **The EBA Campaign in Telstra is at a critical stage:**

Union members in Telstra want a better deal than they have been offered. They know they may have to fight for it as they have many times before. When and if they do, they will be fighting for you to.

#### **How you can help them:**

Join the CEPU today-your union dues are tax deductible and Telstra do not have to know you are a member, in fact they have no right to know and you do not have to tell them!

The CEPU will be establishing a strike fund that you can support for the duration of any upcoming dispute.

If you have been holding off joining the union, talk to a member about the benefits of joining.

In the last few weeks many people in Telstra have made a decision to join the union in order to win a good EBA in Telstra. An EBA that protects you in these uncertain economic times.

**WHY DON'T YOU JOIN THEM?**

**If the benefits of a union negotiated EBA only went to union members, would you join?**

Imagine what would happen if everybody decided not to join and just leave it to the employer to decide.

**NEW MEMBER RECRUITMENT – GET A DISCOUNT/WIN A PRIZE**

**Due to a great response, we have decided to extend the cut off day for joining and getting the union dues discount and going into the draws for the flat screen TV's**

**The new cut off date is close of business on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2008.**

**You are reminded that for employees to vote in an industrial action ballot and to take part in the legal, protected industrial action, they must be a union member. Only union members on the EBA and union members on expired AWAs can legally take part in the ballot and the action.**

We are calling on all non-members to join and help us secure a good EBA and an acceptable pay increase. The real cost of living increase for 2007/08 is 5.7% (Bureau of Statistics).

**If you become a union member any time between now and the 31<sup>st</sup> of October, you will:**

- **get a discount start-up union rate for the first half of a year's membership, (and remember, everyone's union dues are fully tax deductible).**
- **go into a draw in the run-up to Christmas for a new flat screen TV, and second draw of an outdoor table top heater (ideal for BBQs etc).**

The current union rates are based on a percentage of salary as follows:

**CATEGORY A \$19.80 per fort**

Based on salary equal to or greater than \$64,798

**CATEGORY B \$18.00 per fort**

Equal to or greater than \$52,522, less than \$64,798

**CATEGORY C \$14.40 per fort**

Equal to or greater than \$37,147, less than \$52,522

**CATEGORY D \$7.20 per fort**

Based on salary less than \$37,147

**Your discount startup rate would be \$7.20 per fortnight, Category D for two quarters, and then you move to the actual rate based on your salary as above.**

If you pay annually you receive a 10% discount on your annual dues. This is a discount available to all members.

Sign up with the union and be part of the campaign to win an EBA which will benefit us all.

**For current members, if they help sign up a new member they will go into the draw for another Flat Screen TV and they will get 2 free movie tickets for every new member they help sign up.**

Build and strengthen our membership to secure a good EBA.

LEN COOPER  
Branch Secretary.