

HR says: Keep voting until we get the right answer

Telstra staff from Service Advantage/Call Centric in Perth are being offered a further non-union, non-negotiated agreement for vote this week, despite a clear majority of Call Centric staff voting NO to a similar proposal less than two months ago. HR snuck out the proposal with a vote within seven days of its release – the bare minimum required by law – and so there has been very little time for members and staff to seek advice.

Why the rush? After knock-backs in Wholesale and Service Advantage, Telstra HR have targeted an even smaller group of staff to try and get their non-union, non-negotiable plan off the ground. Telstra HR are starting to appear desperate to get an agreement in place somewhere...Anywhere!

What's changed from last time? The rejection of Telstra HR's proposals by Service Advantage/ Call Centric and Wholesale staff in September forced some improvements e.g. in redundancy entitlements for new staff. However, most aspects of that agreement remain. By rejecting the sample ECA if its offered in your area, you will maintain the right to join with other Telstra staff to seek a fair agreement across the company.

Make sure you get the full facts: HR's strategy means that they will be looking for small work areas. Be prepared! Unions have prepared an analysis of Telstra's "sample ECA offer", which you can find at <http://yourrightsattelstra.com/>
Note: contrary to the impression created by Telstra's web updates, you do not have to register interest to get a vote on any agreement for your area. You will get a vote *by law* if an agreement is offered in your area and you are employed on the EA or an expired AWA.

Let your union know what's going on in your area: If you hear anything about a proposal being put to a vote in your area, let your union know directly or contact the ACTU on 1300 486 466.

Some questions about Telstra's "sample ECA"

Does the pay rise stack up? Telstra HR's latest offer does not even keep pace with the current cost of living. It also compares poorly with the increases awarded to senior managers. Did you know CEO Sol Trujillo's latest annual increase was 14%, taking his total pay packet up to a staggering \$13.4 mil a year?

What's Telstra really saying about money? Telstra are trying to have it both ways. To you they say the current offer is out for a limited time, and "future pay offers will be reviewed in light of global economic circumstances." But Chief Financial Officer John Stanhope told investors last week "History shows that during periods where the economy slows or even declines, Telstra and its sector continue to grow at rates above GDP (gross domestic product). We would expect that to again be the case." (The Age, 7 November 2008).

Will you lose your rights at work? If the proposed agreement gets up, you will no longer be able to have union meetings in your workplace to discuss workplace issues. It will become illegal. The company will no longer be under any obligation to consult with unions about major changes. It will also be harder for unions to enforce the agreement as they will have a reduced role in dispute resolution.

Divide and conquer?: Telstra HR's strategy is clear and predictable – they want to 'divide and conquer' staff by splitting the workforce into tiny groups so they can reduce your bargaining power.

Second class employees?: The introduction of a two part agreement means new and AWA employees will miss out on guaranteed pay increases, have lower conditions of employment and get less say over hours of work.

There is a better way. You showed in September that when Telstra workers stick together and reject these unfair agreements we can get a better deal for all Telstra workers. The Government is also about to introduce new industrial relations laws that will restore some fairness in the workplace.

