

Australian Services Union

HUNTER WATER ABANDONS BALLOT

Members Vote

YES - to industrial action

NO - to the HW Employer "Agreement"

Hunter Water Abandons Ballot on Agreement

HW today advised the ASU that it will abandon its vote for management's agreement and return to the negotiating table. The decision of HW follows members' decision to support industrial action and to vote NO to any agreement that is proposed by management and not properly negotiated with your negotiation team.

HW and the ASU negotiation team have agreed to meet this Friday to re-open negotiations.

Pre-Strike Ballot –Overwhelming YES vote to industrial action

Following a recent decision by members to proceed to a pre-strike ballot, the Australian Electoral Commission distributed 210 ballots in the ASU pre-strike ballot. 156 members voted, and overwhelmingly endorsed a YES vote in support of industrial action. Between 83% and 93% of members supported a YES vote on every question.

This vote sent a clear message to HW – the HW proposal is just not acceptable.

9th November - Members Meeting

Last night a meeting of 50 members carrying a total of 100 proxy and present votes, unanimously decided to recommend to members that they:

- Vote NO to the HW employer proposal on wages and conditions, and
- Attend a mass meeting of members on Monday 9th November to determine what industrial action members will take in pursuit of a better agreement with HW

Following HW's decision to return to the bargaining table, this meeting will also hear a report on Friday's Negotiations.

Members meeting UNANIMOUSLY votes NO to HW proposal

Last night members also unanimously decided to reject the HW proposal and call on members to vote NO in the ballot to be conducted this week.

Members at the meeting were shocked to hear that HW has made a number of big changes to their proposal which will severely disadvantage members.

Set out below are 7 reasons why members supported a NO vote.

7 reasons why we need the agreement changed

Set out below are the big issues that the ASU negotiating team will focus on at our meeting with HW this Friday. If you have other issues of concern please contact your delegate.

1. NOT an agreement – just the employers “wish list”

The HW proposal is NOT an agreement. It's management's proposal that is not supported by your negotiators and not supported by members.

Agreements should be negotiated in good faith – not achieved by one party cutting and running when it can't get what it wants.

2. Unacceptable pay increases

The HW proposal means your pay increases are 3%, 4% and 3.5%, nothing more. Interest rates are going up, inflation is on the rise, management are getting bonuses and your pay increases are just not good enough.

We need a pay rise that is fair, agreed and that is locked in.

3. Training Allowances not included in the Agreement

In the HW proposal that you are being asked to vote on, not one of your training allowances has been included in the agreement.

Waste Water Operators Certificate 2 and Certificate 3 have not been included in the agreement. HW had previously promised to insert these allowances into the agreement.

4. Part –time conditions slashed

The latest HW proposal – NOT agreed by your negotiators – will remove the rights of part-time workers to regular and consistent work and reduce them to shift workers whose rosters can be changed at any time by management.

This proposal is totally unacceptable, has never been discussed at the negotiation table and will be very bad for part-time workers.

5. Changing who is covered by the agreement

HW has changed the scope of your agreement (who the agreement applies to) – no one understands what it means or why this has been done.

6. Pay Scales are incorrect

In haste to have the proposed enterprise agreement voted on .HW have not considered all pay scales.

Waste Water Treatment Employees actually have 5 pay scales not the suggested 3 that are outlined in the proposed agreement.

7. Christmas Shut Down

HW had agreed to a voluntary Christmas Shut down but that has changed in the words they have put in their “agreement”.

HW Head Office Staff will be required to take leave during the Christmas and New Year period.

All Field Employees will work during the Christmas and New year period in order to comply with the Essential Services Clause . As for Head Office Employees you will be required to use your leave entitlements unless you are fortunate enough to be one of the selected few to be called upon to work. How many staff will be required to work? That is a good question, still not answered.

There will be a full report back to a mass meeting of members on Monday 9th November at 5pm – further details to follow.