

Utilities Management EA Update 23/09/2021

On Thursday 23 September, the SBU met with Utilities Management to continue negotiating your next enterprise agreement – management continues their claim to exclude Enerven workers from the current EA and create two separate agreements.

The main issue discussed at the meeting was the inclusion of an ‘availability’ clause. The SBU continue to argue for a clause that clearly outlines the obligations of both the company and the workers, is fair and can be easily understood by all involved. We are at the very early stages of negotiating this UMPL claim, today we discussed the principals and concept of how it might work, we will keep you informed as the discussions evolve.

The SBU is continuing to consult with members re the UMPL proposal to exclude Enerven workers from the current EA, but the view from the majority of both SA Power Networks and Enerven members so far is that a move to 2 agreements is not supported. Feedback on this is invited from all employees from all areas. Some of the main reasons the SBU and union members are concerned about management’s proposal for separate EAs are that:

- We know management have talked about their desire to cut costs (through their so called new ‘market rates’) and how overpaid utilities management workers are so it’s likely Enerven workers will be asked to accept an inferior agreement compared to the current EA, through reduced: pay, penalty rates, allowances and loss of contractor parity in an effort to be "more competitive in the market".
- Even if we secure a good agreement for SA Power Networks workers, what’s to stop SAPN management transferring workers to Enerven and worse pay and conditions? What’s to stop them transferring your work to Enerven and saying your position is no longer required, but saying there’s the same job with Enerven with worse pay and conditions open? These are important questions we need management to answer

Management understands reducing future employees’ wages was unpalatable to workers and withdrew those claims at the 6 September meeting. But then announced one week later they were seeking a separate Enerven agreement. We think it’s a not so subtle attempt to create the 2 tier workforce they wanted by another means.

Management have said one of their ‘imperatives’ is to make things simpler in the EA, but how does 2 separate agreements make things simpler? The answer is it does NOT.

The SBU continue to assess our legal options in relation to the claim for separate agreements claim and the issuing of a separate NERR mid bargaining.

The next bargaining meeting is set for Thursday 7 October.

SAME WORK, LESS PAY, WE SAY, NO WAY

For more information regarding the SAPN/Enerven enterprise agreement negotiations, contact your relevant union workplace delegate or your Union Organiser:

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PLEASE SHARE THIS UPDATE WITH YOUR WORKMATES