Utilities Management EA Update 06-05-2022

UMPL Tables a Claim for 2 separate Enterprise Agreements

The SBU met with the UMPL bargaining team on the 4th of May to attempt to progress bargaining for a single Utilities Management Pty Ltd (UMPL) Enterprise Agreement (EA). The meeting, held at the Highway Hotel was attended by SBU representatives, the UMPL's negotiation team and 8 Enerven Individual Bargaining Reps (IBR's) with a few other Enerven IBR's present via Teams.

Once introductions had been made, the SBU responded to UMPL's wage offer of 3% by rejecting it, along with the $1000 '*once off payment*' to get their Forced Availability Clause over the line as well as the removal of the Dispute Resolution Procedure.

The basis of the SBU's rejection of UMPL's wage offer of 3% is our Members concern over the rising cost of living. Last week the Consumer price Index (CPI) was announced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as 5.1%. Therefore 3% annual wage rises would leave our Members suffering a pay cut in real terms. The SBU repeated our wage claim of 3.5% per annum or annual CPI figure (whichever the greater). Keep in mind that UMPL are protected from CPI, as the AER Determination wage escalators are set as "CPI + X%".

UMPL then went on to table a new claim, that incorporates 29 related sub-claims, for a separate Enterprise Agreement for Enerven. Many of these claims are the same as the claims they have tabled in the previous Enerven Enterprise Agreement Meetings. An UMPL representative stated that they 'didn't have much more to discuss about SAPN and wanted to focus on Enerven'. They then went through a list of 27 items to be bargained within their proposed separate EA. 2 claims were later added, totalling 29.

After a short break to consider the company's proposal, the SBU responded by stating that our imperatives are that our Members wages and terms and conditions of employment are protected and improved and that SBU will consider any proposals from UMPL against these imperatives.

Whist the SBU is not opposed in principle to two separate Agreements we rejected the claim of a separate Enerven Agreement as tabled on the basis that we don't have a draft document to consider and that provisions the company outlined to be included would constitute a reduction in the wages and conditions of the workers who would be covered by it.

We advised UMPL that if they wished the SBU to consider a separate Enerven Agreement they need to provide us a draft. After some prompting, UMPL reps confirmed that they do have a draft Enerven Agreement, but they are not ready to share it yet – despite the fact that it's been **2 years** since the current Agreement expired!

During the discussions, UMPL said that GSW pay rates are too high for some future roles in the business, and they would like to introduce some lower pay levels so they could compete with lower paying contractors. Some example roles given were Drone Pilots, Solar Panel Cleaners and Veg Clearance Workers on solar farms. The company also indicated that they are seeking changes to LAFH arrangements and want to increase the span of ordinary hours (from 06:00 – 18:00 to 05:00 – 19:00).

UMPL spent most of the meeting trying to negotiate a separate Enerven EA, even after we rejected it as it as an incomplete proposal that does not protect and improve wages and conditions. After 6 hours in the negotiating room no progress was made on any of the SBU claims. The meeting was viewed by the SBU as an inefficient use of our negotiating time.

Our next meeting is scheduled for the 19th of May 2022 and it needs to be a lot more productive. **2 years is 2 long!**

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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