

Hi there

My submission relates to not only my own situation, but so many others I know who will be equally, differently, and some even worse off than I have been.

Since December 2013, we knew the government was going to try and make a point about rights at work for Public servants. So when the staff along with the CPSU outlined its' main 3 priorities, including:

- Job security
- Access to leave and current entitlements as per the agreement from 2011-2014
- A fair and reasonable pay rise,

We knew that as a collective (which has been reiterated many times in dealing with the various GMs in charge of the bargaining process), that we valued our current conditions being retained over a pay rise. And the communications about the Bargaining Framework only verified that we wanted to retain our conditions, resulting in overwhelming rejections of those offers.

What I perceive is that while we have achieved maintaining current conditions, the perception is that this has been facilitated by stealth on the Government's part, as well as potentially not taking up opportunities to both allow the Minister in charge of APS bargaining to concentrate their energy on other matters, save money by not having to pay the vast amount of SES and Executive salaries paid for bargaining teams on behalf of all affected agencies, which of course would have been unnecessary if the agreement to listen to staff's sentiments by those in power stating 'an approach to maintain the current agreement with all conditions for 3 more years, with a reduced amount of remuneration increases, compared to the previous agreement'. My expectation is this would've been ratified with a majority vote. This has been repeatedly echoed throughout both DHS and APS opinion, both via written submissions in staff intranet facilities, meetings with the SES in the bargaining team, and meetings/rallies facilitated by the CPSU, for the best part of the last 3 years.

Certainly, while we agree that savings have to be made, cutting conditions to agencies while the pay scales are un-even between them and other agencies that offset lack of conditions with remuneration, is highly unfair and will cause a culture across the APS, which is divisive, negative, and serving to the self-interest of the rich minority of some across the APS.

While the improvements from the first new draft enterprise agreement to the third one have not gone un-noticed, there is one element that most people are worried about in an environment where change seems inevitable more than ever:

- The ability to consult before a decision is made. This includes clause A7 of the 2011-2014 Department of Human Services Enterprise Agreement, which includes consulting possible changes to employees and their representatives and being able to change the result. Such situations include the ability to have a fair outcome for Paid parking, as well as wanting to send ICT professionals from Canberra to other ICT Campuses like Brisbane and Adelaide, where as a collective we ensured the consultation process resulted in the campuses having staff sent between Canberra, Adelaide and Brisbane in a fair and reasonable manner.

In the latest draft agreement, the Department proposes that staff will no longer be able to be consulted before a decision is made, let alone influence the result with staff wellbeing and priorities for the people charged with doing the work, being taken into account. Without those things, we would've ended up with:

- a balloted paid parking system that would've been unfair and possibly stopped staff who would've previously got parking for free, into not being able to park in the car park at all for 6 months or more.

- IT staff being given the option to move interstate, along with their families, in order to re-apply for their current position, with a minimal amount of notice, or being made redundant, if other staff didn't vacate their job by taking up those moved positions, by moving from Canberra to Adelaide or Brisbane.

Other people may make points about specific clauses, but my hope is I can speak about the collective about consultation in staff being able to facilitate positive changes and helping serve the government of the day, and provide a positive environment where the APS remains both an employer of choice and an appealing place for the best minds to come and make an impact for the people of Australia (and beyond). Certainly the current bargaining process in conjunction with the recruitment freezes, has done everything to contradict that, with people not feeling like they have options with regards to moving or enhancing their careers and lives.

Kind Regards,