

# TELECOMMUNICATIONS news



AUGUST 2016

## CWU Victorian Postal and Telecommunications Branch

Members should note that the Annual financial report will be available on our website [www.cwuvic.asn.au](http://www.cwuvic.asn.au). Any member requiring a copy of the report should contact us directly.

The Financial report will be considered at a General Meeting to be held on

**August 20th at 12pm  
at the Union office 75 Mellville Road West Brunswick.**

*BBQ lunch will be provided*

### TELSTRA EBA

**On an AWA or ITEA and want to return to the EBA?  
Here is what you need to know.**

Telstra were a prolific user of AWA's in the Workchoices era and then ITEA's. Many CFW's were given verbal undertakings that they would be able to revert to the EBA if they wanted to without any penalty such as loss of an RDO or reduced Banding. The situation however is slightly more complex than that.

When did you sign your AWA? Depending on when it was signed some CFW's appear to have no right to return to the EBA; however it appears that many of the early AWA's (Commission) so the status of those AWA's is in doubt. Were you ever given proof that your AWA was registered?

Telstra gave a commitment that AWA employees would be able to return to 'Workstream' arrangements (known as Category 1/Part A in previous EBA's) and Telstra still state they will honor those commitments whether they were given verbally or in writing.

**Will you get an RDO if you return to the current EBA:**

Telstra's position is as follows: if you were working under a 9 day fortnight when the 2015-2018 EBA was approved and you are still working a 9 Day fortnight you will retain your 9 day fortnight.

If however you were not working a 9 Day fortnight when the EBA was approved (November 2015) Telstra say you will not automatically be entitled to 9 day fortnight. Telstra relies on Clause 17.3 (d) of the EBA which states if you

work in an area that works under the Flexible Working Hours Scheme or a 9 Day Fortnight, and you work under these arrangements when this agreement comes into operation, you will continue to have access to these arrangements while you work in that area.

Unfortunately this does not provide any clarity at all on the issue especially if you are on an unregistered AWA. If you are on an AWA or an ITEA and you are considering reverting to the current Telstra EBA 2015-2018 please contact the CWU for advice. It is important that you know beforehand whether or not you will be able to retain your RDO before you terminate your existing individual contract.

### Telstra Banding & Classification Issues:

The issues surrounding Telstra Bandings and Classifications is a constant source of dispute within Telstra.

Many CFW's who have been consistently performing higher duties on a long term basis have not been reclassified at a higher level commensurate with the work that they actually perform.

The Victorian Branch of the CWU was recently successful in winning back pay and a higher banding for a member.

***If you believe that you have not been correctly banded during the recent Wideband exercise and/or you think that your CFW banding does not reflect the work you actually do. Contact the Vic CWU Branch.***



## Telstra continues as one of Australia's biggest offshorers of Australian Jobs:

Telstra is currently undergoing another round of destruction of jobs through redundancy. Many of these jobs are again being offshored. Telstra always uses nice language around this issue describing the work as being transferred to strategic partners or other such nonsense. The reality is this, it is purely a move to lower its costs and increase profits by moving those jobs to poor developing economies. This is not only reprehensible in an economic sense for Australia as it impacts the countries shrinking tax base. Further once the jobs are gone they are not coming back and this leaves many Australians who want to work in secure well paid employment with limited options.

Call centre salaries in India start at around \$250 a month, while in the Philippines, the going rate is around \$300. In another unethical development India and the Philippines have become competitors for the work being outsourced from companies like Telstra setting up another "race to the bottom" on pay and conditions. Both in India and the Philippines the sectors are largely unorganised by unions, which is another attraction for companies like Telstra.

Telstra recent technical woes whilst being glossed over by the company as minor glitches that had limited effect, those working in Telstra know better. Many of the "faults" that result in major widespread outages are due to software upgrades being done remotely from India. The inexperienced technicians don't know when a problem is occurring nor how to work around it or stop as may have happened in the past.

### What to do about Offshoring:

The problem is beyond just one Union, it needs a political solution. Neither of the major parties appear to have any interest in adopting measures that would prevent or limit the flow of jobs offshore. A simple change to the Privacy Act to prevent the transfer of customer data without consent would be one answer but we do not see such a change on the horizon.

A CWU Vic Campaign in 2012 against Telstra and the destruction of high tech jobs at 35 Collins Street garnered over 3500 signatures on a petition in just a few days. There can be no doubt about how concerned the broader Australian public is about the issue. The concern is shared in the US where the Communication Workers of America conducted a national survey revealed broad support for legislation that would limit the offshoring of data and

jobs as well as penalties against companies that offshore through the taxation system.

The CWA found that more than three quarters of American voters give a bad mark to call centres. Survey respondents also overwhelmingly backed proposed anti-outsourcing legislation that contains provisions such as allowing calls to be transferred to a domestic call operator, and preventing companies that outsource call centres from receiving federal or state grants or tax breaks.

The opinions were relatively bipartisan. Overall, 78 percent of voters rate overseas call centers negatively, with nearly 6 in 10 (59 percent) saying they have a very unfavorable impression of them. Voters across the board hold a negative view of overseas call centers, including Democrats (12 percent favorable/79 percent unfavorable), Independents, (13 percent favorable/78 percent unfavorable) and Republicans (14 percent favorable/75 percent unfavorable).

***Australia is long overdue for a sustained campaign against further offshoring of jobs.***



*Authorised: Leroy Lazaro Branch Secretary  
For assistance please ring the union office: (03) 9600 9100  
or 1800 222 609 or Val Butler on 0408 766 444*