

TELECOMMUNICATIONS news



APRIL 2016

Telstra Network

MELTDOWN

Members would be acutely aware of a number of recent failures in the Telstra Mobile Network. The Telstra PR Department went into overdrive after the first failure, slurring a “Tech” who did not follow procedures! Since then they have been left wanting for excuses for **Network Meltdowns**.

Instead of defaming individual employees we suggest that Telstra come clean about the poor Management decisions of recent years such as the following,

- Mass offshoring of maintenance process functions
- Mass redundancies of highly qualified and experienced Technical workers
- Out sourcing of many field roles

It is no surprise at all that catastrophic “network failures are occurring due to the action of **Bean Counters**” that are **Demonically Possessed** in their need to offshore and outsource the jobs of hard working Telstra workers.



EA Issues

Despite the efforts of Victorian Members in opposing the current EA we are stuck with it for the next few years. However we will continue to fight to ensure that Management does not try to impose the worst aspects of the EA.

The banding of Telstra Jobs is an issue where Telstra will attempt to use the new EA to try to reclassify many Telstra Work Stream Jobs to achieve lower bandings and thus lower pay and to attempt to create new lower level positions. **Contact us directly if you find yourself or your area of work in such a position.**

Telstra will try to force all new employees onto their unfair performance based pay system. We must expose their unacceptable work practices so they are shown for what they really are. **Over 90% of Members oppose these performance-based systems.**

Telstra stated a number of times when lobbying for a “YES” vote for the EA that they would not put redeployed workers into unsuitable roles when their positions were made redundant. We will ensure they are kept to this commitment.

Up until the current EA, Telstra were required to pay the minimum of 3 hours double time if you were contacted for emergency work outside normal hours. Unfortunately the new EA allows them to pay you for only 1 hours pay when they contact you for work out of hours. Remember that Emergency Work “is voluntary only”. We suggest members first seek clarification as to what you be paid, prior to starting any such duty. **If they are not going to pay you enough, then don't do it.**

Workers Compensation

Your Branch has recently been handling a number of cases where members workers compensation claims have been delayed as a result of their participation in Telstra's internal "Injury Assist" programme. Injury Assist was introduced in 2014 as an internal "injury management" and return-to-work programme and promoted as an additional service provided free of charge to Telstra employees.

Under the scheme Telstra pays for the first four doctor and physio visits and for up to \$250 worth of incidental treatment costs. Participation is supposed to be voluntary, but Members report that they are being actively encouraged to use Industry Assist rather than applying for workers compensation when they have suffered an illness or injury.

Members need to understand the possible disadvantages of going down this path and to understand their rights in this area.

- The stated aim of Injury Assist is to get you back to work as soon as possible after your injury/illness. While this might sound like a win- win for both Telstra and the employee concerned, it might not be. ***There is a big danger in such programmes of employees being encouraged to return to work before they are in fact fit to do so.***

- An unstated aim of such company programmes is to minimise the company's workers' compensation costs by reducing the number of claims made. And even if you do make a claim, **participation in Injury Assist may delay the process** – either because Telstra delays processing it until you have gone through Injury Assist or because the employee doesn't put in a claim until they have come to the end of the Injury Assist process.

Be clear. If you have a work related illness or injury:

- **You do not have to participate in Injury Assist** or any similar internal company programme.
- You do **have the right to consult your own doctor** about your fitness to return to work
- You **have the right to apply for workers' compensation at any time** after the relevant event that caused your illness or injury.

Health and Safety training: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

The CWU has received a number of reports of Telstra management querying the rights of Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) in relation to training. The reports come at a time when the CWU has been stepping up its efforts in this area to ensure that ALL Telstra HSRs have been trained to the level required to be able to exercise their full rights under current laws. Here, once more, are the facts:

- If you are an HSR and were elected prior to 1 January 2012 you should by now have done a bridging course to bring you up to speed on the current legislation.
- If you are an HSR and were elected after 1 January 2012 you should by now have received full training on the provisions of the current legislation. If you

are in either of these positions and have not done the required training you need to do so now so as to be able to exercise such rights as issuing a Provisional Improvement Notice (PIN) or directing that work be stopped. While you may seldom, or never take such steps, the ability to do so is an absolutely key part of the HSR role.

You also have the right to attend a training course of your own choosing - and Telstra must pay for it.

Any HSR being given contrary information or being denied access to training should contact us ASAP.

*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*