

12 May 2014

Joint SBU Report Back

First Meeting

Contrary to information which Energex has communicated with its staff, today was the first actual meeting to commence negotiations for a replacement Union Collective Agreement.

Proposed Rollover Agreement

From the outset Energex maintained that it wanted to conduct the negotiations as efficiently as possible. To assist the company to meet this objective the combined Union SBU proposed a rollover agreement of 3 year duration. A rollover agreement would be more efficient, cost effective and provide certainty in the current uncertain environment when compared to a long protracted negotiation.

Energex has said that it needs to take the proposal to its board which meets on 26 May 2014, and then seek approval from the government if the board approves this option.

Next Meeting

Energex have indicated that they wish to hold the next meeting on 12 June. Based on the fact that Energex has had since February to prepare for these negotiations and given Energex IR team has significant resources to utilise we are disappointed that Energex cannot meet again until the 12th June.

The SBU reluctantly agreed to meet on 12 June but expect a formal response on the rollover option or details about what can be discussed and what productivity initiatives Energex are seeking in the negotiations.

Based on that feedback we can then determine when the respective log of claims can be tabled. The SBU has informed Energex that if the company will not enter into discussions for a rollover agreement, the SBU will not be providing Energex with our respective logs of claim until the employer has tabled theirs.

Timeframes For Further Meetings

Energex has proposed to meet twice per month after 12 June on Thursdays. The SBU has agreed to this.

Delegate Rights

The ETU has sought additional delegates at the table during the negotiations. Energex are to get back to the ETU out of session.

Venue

The SBU has sought a neutral venue which has been the practice for past negotiations. Energex is to get back to the SBU in relation to the venue.

A Neutral Facilitator

A neutral facilitator has been sought by the SBU if the option of a rollover agreement is not agreed to by the employer. A facilitator has been used in past negotiations.

A Tough Negotiation Ahead

The discussion today evidenced that if Energex do not want to go down that path of a rollover agreement, then members are in for a tough bargain.

The employer used terms such as 'seeking greater flexibility' and productivity initiatives were flagged. Specifically, the Apprentice clause was flagged as a part of the agreement where further productivity may be sought by the employer. In addition, the EDSD allowance was raised by the SBU because it was specifically mentioned in a recent publication by the company's CEO to all staff as something which was necessary at its inception but may not be necessary anymore. Energex would not entertain a discussion on the issue, however mentioned that they understood why the SBU would have concerns about that.

Further Information

For further information contact your Union on 1800 177 244.