



HOUSE PROUD

Stronger Together



SOH EBA 2016 House Proud Campaign

Bulletin # 4- Two massive revelations from management in negotiations

The MEAA House Proud negotiation team pushed Sydney Opera House (SOH) management for details regarding the EBA and Joan Sutherland Theatre (JST) closure at our last meeting on July 14, 2016. MEAA is concerned with management's proposals after they revealed their real agenda during recent negotiations as highlighted below:

The 2.5% pay offer:

Management revealed the offered 2.5% pay rise did not necessarily mean that the workforce would be 2.5% better off.

Now that this pay offer misrepresentation has been uncovered, management need to revise their pay rise offer or explain how the pay offer will benefit staff.

MEAA reminded management that in order for a 2.5% rise in base pay to constitute 'the maximum available' under the *NSW Public Sector Wage Policy 2011*, there must either be no changes to conditions, or any changes to conditions must not result in pay losses which erode the 2.5% wage gains.

The team took management to task, asking: *"Is this offer of 2.5% a guarantee that the conditions being negotiated will not result in pay losses, guaranteeing that the work force will end up 2.5% better off?"*

Management replied to this question by stating that the proposed changes of conditions were minimal and should not affect overall remuneration.

MEAA then took one of the conditions in question - overtime hours contributing to minimum contract hours - and demonstrated **scenarios by which significant losses in pay can result** through the use of an employee case study.

Management then made promises that these extremes would not be practiced, arguing circumstances do not arise where such a drastic application of this loss of condition would apply. MEAA stressed that the closure of the JST was an example a case where these extremes could be practiced.

The JST closure

Management have confirmed that their EBA proposal would have been on the table regardless of the JST closure

This response raised some very important questions from members and MEAA, including the following:

1. Is it fair to allow the concern and anxiety staff have over the closure to have influence over their decision making in regards the EBA, especially if the outcomes of the EBA are not specifically targeting the closure?

In order to help SOH with the closure, our members have elected to sacrifice a more nuanced negotiation where they could have raised lifestyle-impact and safety concerns, but chose to simply ask for a 2.5% pay rise to meet inflation.

2. More importantly, if the closure is not integral to the EBA negotiations, then where and in what forum do staff have the opportunity to express their concerns over the closure and their future at the SOH, a building that we all love and work tirelessly for?

We have asked management for more detail on WHAT they are seeking through the proposal package and WHY?

Other matters that were raised through negotiations:

Management will be providing details on what training and medical requirements are needed to apply for long absences during the closure. Casual staff who work across multiple departments who are concerned if their 'maintenance of earnings guarantee' would apply to them, have been assured by SOH management that the total hours worked for SOH would be taken into account.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Get creative. Go to your delegates with suggestions and examples demonstrating how you will be exposed to a pay loss in regards the changes of conditions proposed by SOH.

It's time stand together and get involved.

Talk to your MEAA delegate today and be informed!

For more info on these meetings, or our House Proud Enterprise Agreement Campaign, contact your union delegates or contact MEAA Member Central: **1300 656 512** aid@meaa.org.au