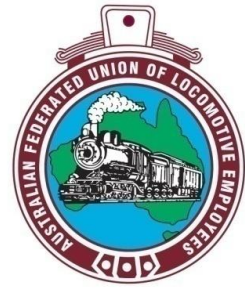


AUSTRALIAN FEDERATED UNION OF LOCOMOTIVE EMPLOYEES



Circular: 77/23
Ref: WATCO EA
28/11/2023

WATCO Enterprise Bargaining Update – Agreement in Principle Reached

Dear Members,

Workplace bargaining representatives and AFULE State Officials met with WATCO to finalise the intent of bargaining (drafting of the proposed new EA).

There had been a few sticking points that needed to be addressed before, in our view, a new EA should be sent to the workforce for a vote.

Since the last session of bargaining, the issue of multiple barracks workings had been rectified/removed and a system of Lift Up/ Lay Back (LU/LB) negotiated. Your bargaining team was well aware of the resistance from some in the workforce to have LU/LB introduced however, there was interest in doing so if there was a penalty payment associated and an uplift in rostering conditions in some other type of way inserted into the EA.

What has been negotiated for your proposed EA regarding LU/LB is as followed;

- Shifts confirmed 24 hours prior (increased from the current 12 hours)
- Maximum 1 hour lift up, 3 hours lay back (more by agreement).
- All time altered with less than 12 hours notice - to be paid as a standalone payment of 100% of the hourly rate of the day, paid fortnightly (not to cycle).

The Operational Roster will be updated (if needed) by 1800hrs daily (30 hours prior to the day of operations). If your start time is required to be altered with less than 24 hours notice, the shift may be altered by a maximum of 1 hour earlier or 3 hours later (more by agreement).

If your shift is required to be altered with less than 12 hours notice, the shift may be altered by a maximum of 1 hour earlier or 3 hours later (more by agreement) however, all alterations with less than 12 hours notice are paid at 100% of the applicable hourly rate of pay (paid fortnightly, not to cycle).

Your shift can only be altered once under 24 hours from the shift commencement time, unless you agree to multiple changes.

The system of LU/LB will only commence once a wakeup call process has been implemented by the business between the hours of 1800-0600, whereby employees will receive an audible notification of the alterations requiring acknowledgement of receipt. You will not be woken to be informed your shift has been altered. Between these hours, you will only be called at your nominated wake up notification time to commence preparing for work.

Until the notification system is operational, the current rostering arrangements remain (changes under 12 hours by agreement only, no payment associated).

The last hurdle to overcome prior to obtaining our support to send the proposed EA for a workplace vote related to wage increases. Previously WATCO had committed to wage increases of 3%, 3.5%, 3.5%, 3.5%.

Traincrew representing Traincrew

Some lively discussions took place when WATCO management informed your bargaining representatives that the 2% wage increase provided to employees on November 5 this year would be incorporated in the proposed year one 3% wage increase.

I can now advise that a position has been negotiated whereby the year one increase will be backdated to coincide with November 5 2023, and increased by .5%, equating to a 3.5% wage increase for 2023. In other words, if the proposed EA receives majority support, all WATCO employees will receive 1.5% backpay to 5 November 2023.

Yearly anniversary wage increases remain at 3.5%, for a total of 14% over the life of the agreement.

Members would be aware this has been a long process. I commend you all for your patience and commitment to fight for a better deal.

Based on the current position of the business and the deal that is currently on the table, we believe that your bargaining team has negotiated a deal that warrants consideration and support.

From here, WATCO will be initiating “roadshow” presentations over the coming weeks at all depots to explain the proposed changes. The AFULE will be attempting to have a bargaining representative or an official at all roadshow locations to further discuss the proposal with members and gain feedback.

If you have any questions, please contact your state office on 3844 9163, email traincrew@afule.org.au or contact your local AFULE representative.

In Solidarity,



Mick McKittrick,
State Secretary