



NOTICE TO MEMBERS



22 March 2017

Live L.V. Jointing accident.

On Monday 20th March at about 3am one of our members Jake Archer suffered a serious electric shock while performing Live L.V. underground jointing in a pit in the Sydney CBD. It is with great relief that I can report Jake is now recovering in hospital and is in a stable condition. If not for the diligence and training of his fellow ETU members who performed CPR until the ambulance arrived, this could have quite easily resulted in a fatality. Our thoughts are with Jake and his family and we wish him a speedy recovery.

Live jointing is something that the union has raised concerns about in the past and the fact is that it results in far too many accidents. There is something seriously wrong with a system of work when it has to be done alive in preference to properly organizing and planning jobs in a way so that interruptions to supply have to occur and people can work safely on mains and apparatus in an isolated and de-energised state. To their credit and in consultation with the ETU, Ausgrid has today placed a **suspension on all Live L.V. work** – that includes suburban and Sydney CBD work. I have attached a copy of that suspension notice from Ausgrid. The union fully supports this suspension and will work with Ausgrid to understand the cause of this and other related accidents in a bid to develop better work processes around L.V. jointing. In the meantime I ask that everyone observes this suspension to the letter.

Ausgrid Agreement Negotiations.

Your negotiating team met with Ausgrid management yesterday in what was the third meeting under the new owners - Ausgrid Management Pty Ltd. Several matters were discussed including the following headline issues;

Redeployment / Redundancy; The combined unions have consistently made it clear that the employment security provisions of the legislation governing the recent lease transaction are non-negotiable. In a nutshell that means that there cannot be any forced redundancies prior to June 2020 when those job security provisions expire. For your information please see the attached resolution from the executive of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) which underwrites this position with support from the whole union movement. Ausgrid appear to be sympathetic to this point of view but have expressed concern as to how they will deal with surplus employees in the redeployee pool which they say will only grow in size over the life of the agreement.

Consultation / Dispute Settlement; Ausgrid have expressed concern over the time that consultation and disputes take and also raised an issue with the status quo provision of the disputes settlement procedure. The combined unions made it clear that the status quo provisions were not up for negotiation. In terms of the mechanics of the consultation clause, our view is that consultation can be made more efficient and expedited if consultation is both up front and genuine in nature i.e. not consultation on how a predetermined managerial decision is arrived at but consultation on ideas the organisation may be considering with opportunity for genuine input from our members. The point was also made that members and their workplace delegates needed to be given more autonomy, recognition and authority to negotiate early on during the process.

Classification structures and allowances; Discussion related to a more simplified and rationalised system of classifications and allowances which would involve multiskilling and the incorporation of allowances in to the classification hourly rates.

Smaller working groups have been formed off the main negotiating committee to formulate more detailed proposals from the unions in each of these areas. The delegates forming these groups are listed on the following page. I encourage all members who may have a contribution to make to feed this through their respective delegates up to these negotiating committee representatives. This is your Agreement and if you have input you should provide us with that so we can consider it as part of our position during the negotiations.

All proposals will be ultimately be brought back to the full negotiating team for approval before being tabled in the negotiations with Ausgrid. Please be aware that all negotiating positions are ultimately subject to the approval of further full delegates meetings should we begin to reach a negotiated outcome with Ausgrid.

On that note, I have to say that our experience with Ausgrid Management Pty Ltd at this early stage of the negotiations has been far more encouraging than the experience we had when the former (State Government) owners were on a mission to strip the company of cash and attack unions - prior to the sell off.

There is now genuine dialogue and a will on both sides to try and reach agreement on a number of keys issues. Whether this goodwill will be enough to transform in to proposals that will give effect to both parties' interests remains to be seen, but we are much more positive about that prospect than we have had reason to be over the past 3 years.

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In Unity,



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