

# AEU NT Member Bulletin 14/2021

30 November 2021

## In this bulletin:

- No employee ballot for teachers this year
- General EA employee ballot going ahead
- Branch Conference 2022 arrangements

### **No employee ballot for teachers this year**

Last week the Chief Minister released a hurried revision to the government's wages policy. Writing directly to all NTPS employees, he promised a \$4000 bonus that workers could vote on before Christmas, seemingly funded by the sacking of hundreds of unvaccinated staff.

Even though the wages policy is decided by cabinet, it is not clear whether Mr Gunner discussed the revised policy with any ministerial colleagues before he announced it.

The revision certainly seemed to take the Commissioner for Public Employment by surprise – we understand OCPE found out about it on Monday morning much like everyone else. By Tuesday, unions had received a formal offer incorporating the new wages policy and were told the government wanted to put the offer to an employee ballot before the end of the year.

On Thursday the AEU NT Branch Executive unanimously rejected the revised offer for teachers, advising the Commissioner of our reasons: namely, that the revised offer still froze salaries, that our concerns with regards to the first offer had not been addressed, and that it was not clear how the additional bonuses would be funded, because the Government would not release additional funds to agencies – meaning school budgets would likely take a direct hit to fund the \$4000 one-off payment to each employee.

On Friday the Commissioner advised us in writing she would not be putting the offer to an employee ballot for teachers this year. This means there will be no vote on a new agreement for teaching staff until at least February next year, and the Commissioner has said there will be no bargaining meetings until the new year. Our office will advise members as soon as there are further developments.

### **General EA employee ballot going ahead**

There will, however, be an employee ballot for the NTPS general agreement covering non-teaching staff in education. This ballot will open on Wednesday 8 December and close on Friday 17 December.

Our advice to our members in the non-teaching stream remains the same as for the first offer: you should vote to reject the revised offer, and thereby empower your unions to negotiate a better deal on pay.

Even though the so-called bonuses are larger than in the original offer, this is still a four-year pay freeze that will drastically reduce your long-term earnings within the NTPS.

To put things in perspective: even if you were offered a flat rate pay increase of \$1000 a year, that would still equate to an additional \$10,000 in remuneration over the four years – the equivalent to what's on offer with the revised wages policy.

However, with \$1000 flat rate pay increases, at the end of the four years your base salary would have increased by \$4000 – a substantial difference in base pay to a four-year wage freeze.

Don't fall for the promise of so-called bonuses not linked to your base salary. Vote no.

### **Branch Conference 2022 arrangements**

The AEU NT will be holding our annual Branch Conference for 2022 on the weekend of Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 May in Darwin. The conference venue and accommodation are currently being arranged and we will inform union members as soon as these details are finalised.

Each sub-branch is entitled to register delegates and submit motions to the 2022 Conference, with a cut-off date of Thursday 14 April 2022. Registration will open at early in the 2022 school year.

#### **Let us know ASAP if your workplace, contact details or income have changed**

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