

NTPS ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

NTPS GENERAL ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT INFORMATION SHEET 1/2017

****This bulletin only applies to employees covered by the NTPS 2013–2017 Enterprise Agreement****

OFFER FOR A NEW ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT

This information sheet outlines the terms of the Commissioner for Public Employment's "without prejudice" offer, which was made on 30 May 2017, for a new enterprise agreement to replace the Northern Territory Public Sector 2013-2017 Enterprise Agreement, which is due to expire on 10 August 2017.

This offer has been developed in accordance with the [NTPS Wages Policy 2017-2020](#) and takes into account the submitted unions' claims. Any further claims will also be considered within the Wages Policy. The offer is fair and reasonable, taking into account the current budgetary environment, forecast CPI, competitiveness of salaries and other terms and conditions being offered.

The terms of this offer comprise a total package of improvements and changes to terms and conditions of employment. The salary offer is dependent on the achievement of the proposed changes and if these cannot be achieved the Commissioner for Public Employment reserves the right to vary the salary component accordingly.

Duration

It is proposed the new agreement will have a four year term with an expiration date 12 months after the final salary increase paid under the agreement. This will provide employees and Agency CEOs with certainty and secured terms and conditions over this period.

Salary Increases

Subject to the achievement of efficiency measures contained in this offer and certification of the agreement by the Fair Work Commission:

- an initial salary increase of 2.5 per cent to be paid effective from 10 August 2017 or, the date in-principle agreement is reached if after this date;
- a second salary increase of 2.5 per cent to be paid effective from 12 months after the initial increase;
- a third salary increase of 2.5 per cent to be paid effective from 12 months after the second salary increase; and
- a fourth salary increase of 2.5 per cent to be paid effective from 12 months after the third salary increase.

Work-related and expense related allowances will be adjusted consistent with the current agreement provisions.

Salary increases under the new agreement will not apply to employees who cease employment with the NTPS prior to approval of the agreement by the Fair Work Commission.

Parental Leave

It is proposed to broaden the application of paid parental leave provisions to include surrogacy situations. This will provide employees who meet the relevant criteria with the current generous levels of paid parental leave of up to 18 weeks, paid partner leave of up to two weeks, and up to a total of three years off for parental leave purposes.

Employees will continue to be able to request leave without pay or flexible working arrangements up until the child reaches school age.

Employer Funded Superannuation

In addition to the broadened parental leave provisions, it is proposed the employer funded superannuation payments during periods of unpaid parental leave be extended from six months to 12 months. This would ensure the payment of employer funded superannuation payments for 12 months from the date of commencing parental leave ensuring employees proceeding on maternity leave have no loss of superannuation earnings for 12 months.

Domestic and Family Violence Provisions

The NTPS provides access to uncapped paid leave for employees experiencing domestic and family violence through miscellaneous leave provisions. To improve awareness of these existing provisions it is proposed to include a clause in the new agreement highlighting the commitment to providing leave and other support to employees who are affected by domestic and family violence.

Change Management

The introduction of the model change management clause ensures that staff are consulted during major change as well as changes to regular rosters. It is proposed that the model clause is adopted but that the steps for consultation are retained from the existing clause.

Split Shifts

The introduction of split shifts where there is agreement with the staff and Agencies to enter into those roster arrangements. Split shifts are being considered for operational reasons and to assist employees with flexibility for family responsibilities and commitments.

Allowance for Government House Employees

Physical employees who work at Government House currently receive an allowance for where they work. There is no requirement for these to perform any additional duties at Government House that are not undertaken elsewhere in government. There are also no additional confidentiality requirements for working in these roles beyond what is required under the code of conduct for all employees. It is proposed that this allowance be phased out over the life of the Agreement.

Response to Union Claims

As covered above, I have agreed to a number of Union claims including the inclusion of references to domestic and family violence leave; the extension of parental leave conditions to include surrogacy situations; and extending employer funded superannuation payments from six to 12 months.

I also agree to the following matters, which form part of the union logs of claims, and have been discussed during negotiation meetings, to be incorporated into this offer as set out below.

a. Standardisation of policies across Agencies where practicable

I agree to explore the practicality of the standardisation of policies across the NTPS. It would be appropriate to do this through the Public Sector Consultative Council.

b. Minimal use of fixed period and casual contracts

I agree that the use of fixed period and casual contracts should be limited. The Commissioner's Guideline for Filling Vacancies outlines the principles where fixed period employment may be appropriate such as: specified employment programs, funding and project based positions, backfilling for staff absences. Similarly the principles for casual employment include where there is no regularity or certainty in the hours of work or the length of time that work will be available.

c. Community Language Allowance

It is agreed that the Community Language Allowance will continue to be provided to employees who meet the relevant criteria and have been directed by the CEO to use their language skills as set out in Determination 6 of 2013.

d. Grievance and complaints about any workplace matter must be clearly outlined, independent and timely

I agree that grievance and complaints about workplace matters must be clearly set out, independent and in a timely manner. Employment Instruction 8 provides that CEOs for each Agency must have an internal grievance handling policy which isn't overly complex, ensures prompt resolution and is handled by an impartial officer. Grievance and complaints can also continue to be lodged with the Promotions Appeals and Grievance Review section of my Office.

e. Reasonable Workloads

I agree that the Enterprise Agreement will continue to provide commitments to monitor the workloads of employees.

f. Flexible work arrangements (including transition to retirement)

I agree that the flexible work arrangements should continue to be set out in the agreement. The arrangements and options are also summarised in my Commissioner's Information Sheet Flexible Work Options as well as the Part-Time Employment Commissioner's Guideline. My Office is also developing a policy framework '*Managing the ageing workforce in the NTPS*' which will include initiatives that address the requirements of individual employees and agencies as a whole. The unions will be consulted on the policy.

g. Rights at Work / Union Related Matters

I agree to maintain the current Union Representation provisions which include reasonable worktime to consult with employees on matters affecting them.

h. Occupational Health and Safety

I agree that there should be clear guidance to ensure the health and safety of employees and have issued Employment Instruction 11 which sets out the minimum requirements for an agency health and safety program. This includes provisions for identifying and minimising risks and hazards such as remote area travel.

Similarly the requirement for all employees to behave appropriately in the workplace is set out in Employment Instruction 13, Inappropriate Workplace Behaviour. This instruction also requires Agency CEOs to develop and implement policies and procedures which foster appropriate workplace behaviour and respect as well as dealing with inappropriate workplace behaviour and bullying.

i. Commitments to ATSI recruitment, training and career progression.

The Indigenous and Career Development Strategy 2015-2020 has a NTPS global target of 16 percent Indigenous employment. This target includes a 10 percent target for Indigenous participation in senior management and executive levels. The strategy includes themes which development of culturally appropriate recruitment and retention strategies as well as career development programs.

I have also considered other matters raised in the log of claims provided on 2 May and 16 May. As discussed in bargaining there were some claims that could not be agreed to as they would restrict the ability of Agency CEOs to allocate resources, which would not be in line with the Wages Policy (for example, four percent pay increase).

PROPOSED CHANGES

Northern Territory Allowance

It is proposed The Northern Territory Allowance (NTA) will be phased out for new employees, however this allowance will be retained for existing employees currently receiving the allowance.

- For employees currently receiving the \$960 this rate will remain unchanged.
- For employees who commenced on or prior to 31 July 1987 who receive a variable rate (depending on their designation and increment), it is proposed that the rate is standardise at the top increment rate for each classification.

The purpose of the allowance stemmed from 'District Allowances' originally provided by the Commonwealth. The allowance was provided, amongst other incentives such as leave fares for employees employed in or transferring to remote regions. The allowances recognised the cost of living, climate and isolation of the remote locations, and were used as incentives to recruit employees to the Territory.

The Territory is now a sought after location to live in and raise families, and the allowance is no longer required as an incentive to recruit new employees.

Alignment of weekly hours for Radiographers with other Professionals at 36:45 hours

The maximum weekly hours for Radiographers has been 35 hours per week. This was due to the safety issues associated with Radiographers working with radiation. Improvements to equipment several years ago have resulted in all other jurisdictions moving to a 38 hour week. Radiographers are paid the same salary as all other professional employees but still work 35 hours per week compared to other professionals working 36:45 hours.

Summary of Offer

In the current climate and consumer price index at 0% this year I consider the above offer to represent a fair package that improves wages and conditions for employees and ensure conditions are maintained for four years.