Public Sector Enterprise Bargaining Process for 2016 - 2019

ANMF (SA Branch) and the SA Health have agreed to adopt a process call ‘Interest Based Bargaining’ for the new Nursing and Midwifery (South Australian Public Sector) Enterprise Agreement which will come into effect from September 2016 – 2019.

What is Interest Based Bargaining (IBB)?

IBB is a mediated process where the employer and union parties negotiate their way through items that are agreed to be important issues/outcomes for resolution by both parties.

IBB is based on efforts to achieve a “win: win”, outcome in the shared interests of both parties. The process does not start with the preparation a ‘log of claims’. Instead, it focuses on key issues, goals and common ground of both ‘sides’. The parties prepare and agree together the ground rules and ways of working, the areas of joint research and sharing of relevant information.

IBB uses an independent facilitator to manage the negotiations, to keep both sides working on the agreed process and towards outcomes and to facilitate debate and achieve agreed resolutions.

However, the ANMF (SA Branch) will continue to pursue matters of interest and concern to our members such as employment security, staffing levels and skill mix, wage outcomes and enhanced employment conditions.

Needless to say, that if there are unreasonable delays or if the process is not productive the IBB process will be terminated and we will take any action that is endorsed by members.

How is this different to the approach of the traditional enterprise bargaining that we have undertaken previously?

Prior to 2016, the nursing and midwifery enterprise bargaining process was referred to as ‘Positional Bargaining’ with each side having a ‘log of claims’ as the starting point.

The process can be adversarial with each ‘side’ looking for a win and as a result has taken considerable time and resources in the past to reach agreement, with a lot of “toing and froing” between the parties.

Authorised by: Rob Bonner, Director, Operations & Strategy, ANMF (SA Branch) : 20/4/2016
What are the benefits of IBB?

IBB is based on the premise of bargaining in good faith and can:
- be more effective in getting to the serious matters and outcomes for members.
- ensure that the parties (that is the ANMF (SA Branch) and SA Health) collaborate to find a 'win- win' outcomes
- enable the strategy to be focused on developing mutually beneficial solutions and agreements based on the interests of everyone involved
- have a process that works to balance opposing interests
- enable some matters to be agreed upfront therefore requiring no further debate

Do we prepare a log of claims?

No. In the past, the bargaining process has commenced with the ANMF (SA Branch) preparing a log of claims, the employer preparing a list of matters that it wants their employees to agree to and then it was time for the battles to begin!

Rather than the discussion being based on a “we want this outcome”, IBB starts from a premise of ensuring that both parties are committed to ensuring the interests of each side are addressed with the view of developing possible solutions. In this way, solutions can emerge from the discussions that can meet the needs and serve the interests of both the ANMF and our members and SA Health (the employer) and the employees.

This does not mean that we cannot address issues raised by members that are creating concern in worksites. It just means that the issue is raised as a matter for discussion with broad goals and objectives rather than being expressed as a specific claim or outcome. We are continuing to identify matters for discussion through our workplace visits which are taking place in April/early May. The list if matters identified will be set out on the website so that you are able to check that your matters have been recorded.

How will we know how the Bargaining process is progressing?

ANMF (SA Branch) have established a Reference Group which consists of worksite representatives from most health sites. The members of the Reference Group have undergone training on IBB to support their role during the Bargaining process.

The Reference Group membership will have an important role in providing accurate feedback to ANMF members on the progress of Bargaining and to elicit any foreseeable issues that may be arising during the process.

We will also provide regular feedback to members through the website, eBulletins and Newsflashes as the discussions proceed from May to July 2016

If you require any further information, please contact the ANMF Duty Officer on 83341900 or email enquiry@anmfsa.org.au

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