

Guide Dogs: Some progress, but a long way to go in bargaining

Dear Member,

Yesterday your HSU Bargaining Team, along with elected representatives, met with Guide Dogs management. Attached is a breakdown of the meeting.

There has been progress on several claims, but the key issues are still outstanding.

Pay and pay increments:

At yesterday's meeting, management reiterated the GDN views on linking pay advancement to performance because of the desire for a "high performance culture". This is HR speak for controlling pay, where pay increments are linked to performance measured as by management.

When pushed it became clear that a vast majority of employees wouldn't be eligible for a pay increment but instead would get a "global percentage." In real terms this means most people won't ever progress through the GDN salary structure.

Your HSU Bargaining Team argued firmly that progress through any structure should be based on experience and years of service, not a subjective assessment against KPIs made by management. Salary structures should be set up to allow people to progress through, otherwise they are pointless.

Motor Vehicle Policy:

Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey. We have collected and collated your responses. If you are interested in looking at these contact HSU Bargaining Officer lauren.hutchins@hsu.asn.au. These responses have been redacted in part to ensure the confidentiality of employees.

We will be discussing the draft policy at the bargaining meeting set for 14 May. If you didn't get a chance to complete the survey, email your comments to Lauren Hutchins by close of business 13 May.

Where to next?

We are getting to the pointy end of bargaining. There will come a time when members have to decide if we are willing to accept a compromise or if we are going to have to push back.

It's important that all employees are kept up to date about where the key issues are at. Please forward this onto your colleagues who haven't yet joined the HSU.

For more information about what's happening at Guide Dogs contact your newly elected (congratulations) delegates: Peter McKenzie, Metaxia Tsoukatos and Matt Wood.

In unity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gerard Hayes', with a long, sweeping underline.

Gerard Hayes
Secretary, HSU NSW/ACT/QLD

Notes from Guide Dog NSW ACT Bargaining Meeting 11 April 2019

Below is a summary of yesterday's meeting and the outcome. For a more detailed breakdown contact your local HSU delegates.

Pay increments:

GDN have proposed that employees who are deemed to have been "high performers" will be entitled to progress through to the next pay increment and that some of those employees will be entitled to a further high-performance payment. The remaining employees would be entitled to a pay increase (yet to be tabled).

The Bargaining Representatives retained the position that progression through pay increments should be on years of service and not the subjective determination of a manager. Further the Bargaining Representatives were concerned that the number of employees eligible for high performance increments could be capped artificially by management.

It was agreed that the issue of increments and pay broadly are linked to the classification structure. The issue was put on hold until further discussions take place about classifications at the next meeting.

Scope of the Agreement:

GDN have written to impacted employees who are still considering their position.

It was agreed to postpone further discussions on the scope of the agreement until such time as the classifications have been agreed to.

Dual qualification allowance:

GDN have again withdrawn the allowance that would apply to those working both as O & M Specialists and GDMIs, and said they are considering other ways to remunerate this group.

The Bargaining Representatives stated that any additional payment should be transparent and as such should be part of the agreement. This may be raised again as part of the classification discussion.

Time Off In Lieu:

GND has agreed to Time Off In Lieu at one hour worked for two hours TOIL for Sundays. This is a great outcome for those employees who have been arguing for fairness.

Personal/Carers Leave:

GDN confirmed that the five days discretionary personal leave was for sick leave only. However, GDN confirmed that employees didn't have to exhaust all leave- only personal leave- to access this.

The Bargaining Representatives were disappointed in this as the effect is that GDN is offering nothing more than it currently offers employees.

The Bargaining Representatives put back a counter position of 12.5 days personal leave, accruable, and that the discretionary component of five days continues.

On the issue of evidence in principle agreement was reached that a statutory declaration or certificate would be required *after* two days absent.

Support Leave:

In principle agreement was reached on Support Leave, that additionally in the event that an employee is both caring for an animal and is being matched to another in the same year the employee is entitled to six weeks paid support leave.

Long Service Leave:

GND rejected the amended claim to access long service leave after 7 years' service. The Bargaining Representatives put forward a further amendment that would allow GND to allow access to long service leave after 7 years at the CEO's discretion. This would allow employees moving between the ACT and NSW some comfort and would allow the CEO to allow access for compassionate reasons.

On Call Allowances:

The Bargaining Representatives confirmed that the words in the latest draft were fine. This has now been resolved!

Language Allowance:

GND has maintained its position that it will not pay a language allowance to employees who are using languages other than English to communicate with clients. This is very disappointing and doesn't acknowledge that employees are currently being directed to clients because of their language skills.

The Bargaining Representatives have maintained their position and have asked that GND discuss this further after doing analysis on who and how additional languages are being. The Bargaining Representatives also stated that they were also open to further discussion about the amount being claimed (currently \$40 a week).

Redundancy:

GND has rejected the improved redundancy amounts being sought by the Bargaining Representatives however have agreed to an enhanced payment for employees with a disability. For other employees GND has maintained the minimum payments under the National Employment Standards except for employees with 10 years' service (the offer is higher). GND will table its position at an upcoming meeting.

Notice of Termination:

It was agreed that a compromise position for notice of termination was:

Less than 12 months service: 2 weeks' notice

More than 12 months service: 4 weeks' notice

This would apply to the employee and to GND.