



Store News

Your Pay Rise?

Most store team members would be aware that talks for a new agreement for Coles Supermarket workers are happening but what does it all mean?

All Coles store team members who work under the retail enterprise agreement (including the meat units in Queensland and Tasmania) have just received a 1.4% pay rise.

This came about because your agreement had passed its expiry date and Coles agreed that they should pay a wage rise even though they haven't made a new formal agreement yet.

Negotiations would normally have started way back in September 2013, which would have seen an agreement finished by now, but Coles weren't ready to start until the end of April this year.

Why weren't Coles ready?

Coles' management want to get rid of the enterprise agreements that currently cover the meat unit workers. (One in each state other than Queensland) These agreements are negotiated by the meat workers union (AMIEU). They also want the Customer Service Agents (the online ordering and transport drivers) to come under the retail agreement and many of those who are transport drivers are members of the Transport Workers Union (TWU).

So what's the problem then?

The problem is that Coles want the wages and conditions in the meat units to be lowered to retail rates and the meat union won't agree to it. The AMIEU are known traditionally to stand together to maintain the conditions of their industry. The retail agreement doesn't deal with the safety and other transport related issues that the drivers have and so the transport union are also unhappy about Coles attempting to put them under the National Retail Agreement.

Coles want to lower wages and conditions in meat units?

Yes. Currently most of the meat units are under their own agreements and have higher wages than the rest of the store. On top of that they get penalty rates for late nights and / or weekend work including double time for work on Sundays, which makes up a lot of their weekly pay.

Coles want to get rid of all those penalties and other benefits in meat units and so those workers are not happy and are refusing to agree to these cuts in meat unit conditions. As one example, Coles want to freeze the packer's rates at their current pay rates, and then only pay them half of any pay rises that apply to the retail agreement until the lower retail rates catch up to them.

So Coles are really to blame for pay rises being held up in the store?

Yes. Coles' greedy grab at the meat workers and transport workers is the real problem.