



Wednesday, May 27, 2009

Cuts go deeper, no end in sight

It is early days in the process, and your union has calculated from recent announcement that more than 80 jobs have already being stripped out of News Ltd newspapers around the country. That number doesn't include the people who were quietly encouraged to take redundancy since late 2008. Staff want to know how many more are to come and who will be affected.

Cuts announced so far include:

- Adelaide Advertiser (8 positions)
- Cumberland Newspapers (15 positions)
- Gold Coast Bulletin and Gold Coast Sun (20 positions)
- NEWSCentral production centre in Brisbane (20 positions across three mastheads)
- The Australian (9 positions)
- Hobart Mercury (10 positions)

National Features Desk

So far there is no certainty about the scale of job cuts that will flow from the creation of the National Features Desk for metropolitan newspapers. Today a telephone conference of delegates from around Australia called for the company to provide more clarity to local managers, many who are telling staff they are in the dark about the full implications of the plans.

No guarantees

The company is making no guarantees to staff on important questions they have regarding redundancy. In a letter to the Alliance, group employee relations manager Andrew Biocca said the "current practice" was to make extra (unspecified) payments to people over the age of 65 years, and it was also "current practice" to pay people on individual contracts the same redundancy and those working under the collective agreement. He also said the company would continue to "identify and select employees mindful of the roles we require and the skills we require". Arising from that is the million dollar question: when does current practice become past practice? When times get tougher?

Staff want guarantees on:

- Staff to be moved off individual contracts and onto the collective agreement.
- Redundancies should be voluntary, so everyone has an opportunity to apply.
- The discriminatory provisions in the redundancy agreement should be addressed – ie, the 65 years of age cap and the reduced payment for people who've moved from full time to part-time and the inclusion of casual service the calculation.
- Discussions about options that could save jobs (eg reduced working hours).

Stopwork meetings will be held around the country in the next fortnight. Contact your local organiser on 1300 65 65 12 or email claire.orourke@alliance.org.au

Join your union: www.alliance.org.au



Tuesday, May 26, 2009

A legal guarantee of conditions

Make the move to get off your AWA or ITEA before it's too late.

Bargaining agent forms are continuing to come in, and we are getting closer to our target. The more people who are involved the more likely it is that the company will realise how important it is to people to have their entitlements legally protected.

We will only present bargaining forms to management when the majority of people on AWAs at News Ltd have sent their forms to the Alliance. With redundancies starting in earnest at News, don't rely on a promise or current company policy when it comes to your conditions.

Your union can only legally represent you if we have your signed bargaining agent form.

A few easy steps

1. If you're not a member of your union and professional association, join today by phoning 1300 65 65 13 or join online at www.alliance.org.au
2. Sign the form, get it back to your union today by fax 02 9333 0933 or email the form to claire.orourke@alliance.org.au
3. If you have any questions, contact your local organiser on 1300 65 65 12 or speak with your house committee delegate.

Appointment of bargaining agent

Name _____

Address _____

I appoint the Federal Secretary, Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance or his/her representative, as my bargaining agent in relation to the making and approving of any Australian Workplace Agreement, Individual Transitional Employment Agreement (ITEA) or Certified Agreement, or on the variation or termination of any Australian Workplace Agreement, Individual Transitional Employment Agreement or Certified Agreement.

This notice shall remain in effect until it is cancelled by me in writing.

Signature _____

Date _____