

SUPERMARKET MEMBERS UPDATE



AMIEU
FEDERAL

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Dear member,

A quick update on enterprise bargaining in supermarkets across Australia.

Coles

Many members will be aware that Wesfarmers has announced the demerge of Coles and its associated business including Liquorland from the Wesfarmers group of companies.

This follows the disastrous foray of Bunnings into the United Kingdom which has led to a one-billion-dollar write-down of the Bunnings UK business.

We find it odd that after watching the Masters disaster unfold in Australia, leading to great mirth and celebration by Wesfarmers, that they then fall foul of similar attempts by themselves in the UK.

In the aftermath of this share-crunching, profit destroying debacle, capital needs to be

raised and so Coles becomes the proposed saviour by Wesfarmers intention to float Coles on the stock exchange for public tender.

This of course will be subject to Wesfarmers shareholders agreeing to such a float and various other legal requirements are met, which will see the process drawn out over many months.

What does all this mean?

Not really a hell of a lot to workers in Coles other than the people who own the business will change over time and the new shareholders may look at some different direction for the business.

Their focus may change from corny and meaningless 'Down Down' slogans to more customer service or other areas of the business that can be identified as poor performance areas.

The Union is in constant contact with Coles senior management and receives regular briefings and so anything newsworthy will be passed onto our members as soon as we get it.

In bargaining news:

The SDA agreement for the store outside of meat units is currently before the Fair Work Commission for approval and once the outcome of that deal is finalised it is anticipated that meat unit negotiations will commence shortly thereafter.

RAFFWU have lodged objections to the deal which may influence our negotiations if RAFFWU succeed in scuttling this new deal between the SDA and Coles.

Our view on this is that the new deal is pretty much the award and so is likely to be approved, clearing the way for us to commence bargaining.

Questions? Contact your local AMIEU branch office to learn more.



Woolworths

We are now several meetings down the track in negotiations with Woolworths for the new storewide agreement that includes meat units.

In a turn of events, the SDA have supported most of the meat union claims for workers in meat units, and we have found ourselves supporting many SDA claims.

This cooperation is having an effect on bargaining as we are seeing a vastly different outcome for meatworkers so far, than what would have occurred under the previous deal that was reached between the SDA and Woolworths.

That deal was killed off after Coles agreement failed to be approved by the Fair Work Commission when it was found to pay less than the award.

Some areas where we are moving forward include the extension of the 19-day month to all the people

who were previously excluded from that arrangement in rostering.

Woolworths are looking favourably on our claims for 3-year apprenticeships with appropriately increased apprentice wage percentages.

They also appear to be looking favourably on rostering arrangement claims that include a cap on imposed roster changes to 4 per annum.

We have a long way to go yet as the Fair Work Commission capping of the Coles deal meant that we, in practical terms, have to start from scratch to make sure that employees are better off than the award.

Under the old SDA deal the penalty rates, or lack thereof, left many workers below award pay standards and so these must all come back into play, meaning that you will finally be paid properly for

working unfriendly hours and weekends.

We don't anticipate the negotiations taking too long before a deal can be put to you but there is still a long way to go yet and we will keep you up to date on any major occurrences as they happen.



Graham Smith
Federal Secretary

Questions? Contact your local AMIEU branch office to learn more.