



QUEENSLAND BRANCH

# PN COAL NEWSLETTER

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Dear Member

## Dispute: Barracks Allowance (Update 2)

Please see below the answer received from PN management to four questions that were put to them in an effort to try to resolve the dispute about Barracks and Barracks allowance.

You will note in the response that PN state they have consulted fully with employees and have been the model employer and employees have had plenty of opportunity to raise issues.

I draw your attention to a comment in Question 2 where they refer to a meeting with me about a draft RCOP, yes this meeting did occur and the discussion was about employees on temporary transfer who were receiving meals at the accommodation not being entitled to LAFHA, the idea of not paying barracks allowance could not be on the agenda as it had not been floated by the company till well after this date.

I am very keen to hear from members about the statements made in this response.

- Do you feel that there has been consultation about this decision?
- Do you feel that the company has been open and transparent about removing barracks allowance?
- Do you feel that any feedback you have given is being listened to by management?

**Your feedback is urgently required**

**Please send feedback to [bruce.mackie@rtbu.com.au](mailto:bruce.mackie@rtbu.com.au)**

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Please see below response to dispute raised on the 21/10/2014 –

Firstly I would like to clarify Pacific National intends to only remove the barracks allowance in situations where meals will be supplied by the accommodation provider. As the barracks allowance was always intended to offset the cost of employees having to pay for their own food whilst in barracks. If the accommodation provider doesn't provide meals the barracks allowance will be paid. This is custom and practice throughout the Queensland operations.

With respect to the reasons you have outlined in your dispute:

**1. Pacific National has not consulted with employees in a meaningful way over the loss of this allowance.**

Not only has Pacific National ensured that consultation requirements within the EA have been met, we are continuing to consult with our employees through the WIF committees (well after the 14 days required in the EA).

Specifically we have:

- Notified all employees of the change, and the reasons for the change
- The effect the change is likely to have on the employees, and
- The measures that Pacific National is taking to avert or mitigate the adverse effect of the change on the employees

Consultation has included:

- email to all employees
- Pre –start discussion with the local Operations Supervisors
- Ongoing discussions with the Workplace Improvement Forum
- Town hall discussion with the leadership team

Specific issues that have been raised during the consultation period include:

- Quality and quantity of the food that is available at the village
- Variety of food that is available at the village
- Ability to meet specific dietary requirements of individuals staying at the village
- Availability of meals outside kitchen times
- Financial impact that individuals will experience with the loss of the allowance
- Quality of sleep within the villages

With respect to these issues Pacific National has:

- Negotiated with the village provider to have a crib room available to PN employees 24 / 7, this room will be stocked with meals including a toaster, bread, condiments, additional breakfast selection, fresh sandwiches and wraps. We are continuing to work with the village provider to increase the range of meals available within the crib room.
- If individuals have specific dietary requirements we urge them to bring their needs forward and we will work towards them being met
- Have arranged for our Senior Health Specialist to visit both villages with an independent dietician to assess the quality of the food available in the crib room and to provide a report back to the WIF and management teams
- Negotiated with the village provider to endeavour to have a room in between guests to reduce the noise

- A SHE representative will stay at the villages overnight and complete a sleep hygiene assessment with suggested improvements
- Continued to pay the allowance for 1 month following the announcement to allow employees to adjust their budgets accordingly
- Pacific National has a financial advice / support service available to all employees and their immediate family through the Employee Assistance Provider. This service is free of charge to the employee.

**Therefore we reject that claim that Pacific National has not consulted with employees in a meaningful way over the loss of this allowance.**

***2. Pacific National proposes to remove the barracks allowance entirely without any consultation given to whether the barracks allowance is actually for meals or not***

As you can see from the attached log of claims (page 13) this allowance was intended to be for the provision of meals. This is further supported by the ATO reference and the increasing amounts over time indicating the need for further meals.

I would also like to reference a conversation that was held between Senior HR Management and Bruce Mackie (RTBU) on the 17<sup>th</sup> June 2014, where we further discussed the intention of this allowance and corresponding wording in the RCOP. It was very clear to Bruce that this allowance was intended a meal allowance.

Furthermore custom and practice has been that when meals are supplied in the accommodation venue and employees have access to these meals 24 / 7, no allowance is payable.

**Therefore we reject that claim that Pacific National proposes to remove the barracks allowance without any consultation given to whether the barracks allowance is actually for meals or not.**

***3. The meals that have been provided to employees at both the Dysart and Coppabella Mac camps are very inadequate.***

Please refer to the response provided to point 1. In addition it is also beneficial to highlight that Civeo / MAC (the accommodation provider) is a global provider of workforce accommodation including:

“...The Zest Eatery provides a large variety of food including healthy meal options, full buffet breakfast, large dinner selection and crib room. Chefs create a range of nutritious meals daily and they work closely with suppliers to source the freshest and best quality produce and ingredients. Menus work on a 5 week cycle so there are new choices every day. Food preparation is underpinned by ISO accredited Food Safety and Quality management systems to ensure the utmost in quality and consistency...”  
(CIVEO Compendium)

*All Australian sites have been certified to the following standards:*

ISO 9001:2008	Quality Management System
ISO 22000:2005	Food Safety Management System
OHSAS 18001:2007	Occupational Health and Safety Management System
AS/NZS 48001:2001	Occupational Health and Safety Management System

**Therefore we reject that the meals provided are inadequate however Pacific National will continue to work with our employees and the accommodation provider to ensure any reasonable requirements are met.**

- 4. *Given that the amounts contained in the agreement are fixed, we do not accept that they can be unilaterally removed by way of an external document such as the RCOP.***

As per point 9.4 (c) in the EA, this allowance will be updated in accordance with ATO guidelines – referencing that not only is this allowance for meals, but also that Pacific National will continue to ensure the allowance will increase with the cost of food in circumstances where the accommodation provider is unable to provide meals.

Furthermore Pacific National is not removing the Barracks Allowance; it will still apply when employees stay at Barracks locations that do not provide meals.

**Therefore we reject that Pacific National is unilaterally removing an allowance contained in the EA.**

**Unity is Strength**



**Bruce Mackie  
Queensland State President**