



QUEENSLAND BRANCH

PN COAL NEWSLETTER

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Dear Member

Dispute: Barracks Allowance (Update 4)

The RTBU industrial team collated all your feedback and we have attended conciliation before the Fair Work Commissioner, on Tuesday, 18 November 2014.

Two issues were in dispute and due to the issues being linked they were heard in one conciliation session, those issues, were the removal of barracks allowance and the move from Country Roads Motel to Civeo Dysart.

As suspected the issues have come down to how you interpret the words of an agreement. Does saving money constitute a **NEED** to move? The RBTU argued that that is exactly the reason **NEED** was used in the agreement. If the Motel burns down you **NEED** to move. If the motel goes broke you **NEED** to move. If you can save some money, you **desire** to move, not **need** to move. Not surprisingly PN are saying that our interpretation is wrong and they can move.

Further PN argued that the barracks allowance was for meals only and that this is what the RTBU and workplace reps wanted. There was some agreement that the Union and workplace reps argued strongly for a meals allowance "most definitely" and there were amounts claimed considerably higher than the current barracks allowance. However, PN stood firm on wanting a trip allowance. Eventually a trip allowance was settled on. It was called a barracks allowance to be consistent with other PN rail agreements and formed part of the package that was presented to members to vote on in the certified agreement.

Once again PN maintains our interpretation is incorrect and that it was, is, and will always be a meal allowance and if they are supplying meals then it is not payable.

The RTBU sought Commission Spencer to issue a recommendation based on over 2 hours of intense debate between the parties. However, she resisted making a recommendation, instead favouring giving the parties some time to gather more evidence to substantiate claims. Possibly having further discussions with PN and the case will be called back on in the coming weeks.

As I have said in previous updates, it's never a sure thing when you go to the referee but your Union will continue to stand up for what was bargained for and we believe was agreed to. Drivers are asked to continue emailing us about the problems whilst performing barracks jobs and I look forward to keeping you up to date as this dispute unfolds.

Unity is Strength

Bruce Mackie

Queensland State President