

BULLETIN 1/2009

New NTPS Wages Policy 2009-2012

The Northern Territory Government has recently approved its Wages Policy 2009-2012 which will guide enterprise bargaining in the NTPS during that period. The Policy applies to all NTPS agencies, Tourism NT, Power and Water Corporation and Police. The Policy takes account of current Territory economic and fiscal conditions and is also broadly consistent with policies operating in other public sectors nationally. A copy of the Policy is attached to this Bulletin.

Objectives of the Policy

The Policy has four key objectives, briefly:

- to define the roles of all parties in the bargaining process;
- keep costs within bargaining parameters;
- deliver increased efficiency, effectiveness, service outcomes and workplace reform across agencies (“efficiency measures”); and
- support collective bargaining wherever possible.

Key Elements of the Policy

There are some important elements to the Policy, some of which are significantly different from the previous Policy, which you ought to note:

- the Government supports a one system / common approach to bargaining across the NTPS;
- bargaining will be conducted in “good faith” and wherever possible the agreement will be a collective agreement negotiated with the relevant union(s);
- recognising the current economic conditions and budgetary restraints impacting upon the Government, bargaining outcomes will provide for salary increases of up to 2.5% per annum over the life an agreement;
- efficiency measures will need to be assessed according to a range of factors, including the degree to which concessions are made, opportunities for reform and quantitative and qualitative measures;
- to aid employees in receiving timely salary increases and to avoid protracted negotiations, wherever possible salary offers will be made at least four months before current agreements expire: supporting these objectives salary increases will not be back-paid beyond the start of the first pay period after final agreement is reached, or the expiry date of the previous agreement, whichever is the latter;
- the policy specifically states the previously applied position that employees who cease employment before an agreement is certified or approved will not receive salary back-payments; and
- agreements should provide for flexible employment arrangements and not inhibit the Government’s capacity to allocate resources according to its priorities

As with the past Policy my Office will have primary responsibility for conducting negotiations, with shared responsibility with NT Treasury and agencies.

Forthcoming negotiations

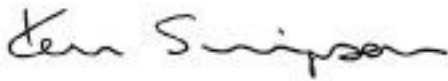
The following agreements are due to expire in 2010:

- 2007-2010 Power and Water Union Collective Agreement – expires 8 August 2010;
- NTPS 2008-2010 Union Collective Agreement – expires 9 August 2010;
- NTPS Teacher and Educator 2008-2010 Union Collective Agreement – expires 31 August 2010;
- NTPS Fire and Rescue Service 2007-2010 Partnership Agreement – expires 7 November 2010; and
- Medical Officers (NTPS) Workplace Agreement 2008-2010 – expires 31 December 2010

The new Wages Policy 2009-2012 will apply to these negotiations.

Further information on bargaining

Further information on the bargaining process will be provided to employees as we move closer to the commencement of negotiations.



KEN SIMPSON
Commissioner for Public Employment
15 September 2009

NORTHERN TERRITORY PUBLIC SECTOR
WAGES POLICY 2009 - 2012

Background

The NTPS Wages Policy 2009 - 2012 covers wage negotiations in the Northern Territory Public Sector for the next 4 years. The Policy objectives are to:

- clearly define the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in the bargaining process and the Government's bargaining principles;
- keep costs within Government parameters;
- deliver increased efficiency, effectiveness, service outcomes and workplace reform across agencies ("efficiency measures");and
- support collective bargaining wherever possible

BARGAINING PRINCIPLES

1. The Government supports a one system/common approach to bargaining covering the "core" conditions, bargaining agenda and outcomes, including wages that will generally apply across all areas of the NTPS.
2. Bargaining with parties will be conducted in "good faith" and, wherever possible, the Agreement will be a collective Agreement negotiated with the relevant union(s).
3. Bargaining outcomes will provide for salary increases of up to 2.5% per annum over the life of an Agreement
4. Improvements to be achieved through efficiency measures will be assessed according to:
 - the degree to which concessions have been made around working arrangements by the other bargaining parties;
 - opportunities for immediate and/or future reform; and
 - quantitative and qualitative measures.
5. Offers for new agreements are to be made at least 4 months prior to the Agreement's nominal expiry date, with salary increases not back-paid beyond the date of the first pay period commencing on or after the parties reach final Agreement, or the expiry date of the previous Agreement, whichever is the latter.
6. Salary offers should explicitly state that increases will not be provided to employees who cease employment prior to an Agreement being approved or certified or approved by the relevant authority.
7. Agreements should emphasise flexibility in employment arrangements that benefit both the employer and the employee, must not contain restrictive work practices and cannot include provisions that restrict the Government's capacity to allocate financial, capital or human resources according to its policy priorities.
8. Principal responsibility for negotiations lies with OCPE, with shared responsibility with NT Treasury and the relevant Agency.