



MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 26 August, 2024

TasNetworks and CEPU to co-operate and protect Tasmanians

The Communications, Electrical & Plumbing Union has honoured its original word and suspended industrial action in response to TasNetworks' severe weather event declaration.

At 4pm today, the CEPU advised TasNetworks that it would SMS members the following at 4.30pm:

"CEPU members are to disregard the text message that they received yesterday (25 August 2024) regarding a Declared Incident announced by the CEO on the same date. TasNetworks have declared a Declared Incident in relation to storms forecast by the Bureau of Meteorology. Members directed to perform work deemed by TasNetworks to be necessary to respond to the impacts of a Declared Incident or to facilitate Emergency Work are to temporarily suspend industrial action to perform that work as directed until the declaration is revoked."

The CEPU's decision to honour the event declaration and suspend industrial action makes a planned Fair Work hearing at 5pm today unnecessary.

TasNetworks CEO, Seán Mc Goldrick, said work will start immediately to help clear a backlog of recent outages and start preparing the network for imminent severe weather.

"I sincerely thank the CEPU for joining us in putting Tasmanians first in coming days," Dr Mc Goldrick said.

"Amid our current differences, we are all Tasmanians. And Tasmanians need TasNetworks and relevant unions united in serving and supporting them at this moment of severe imminent weather.

"With all hands back on deck, we can get on with doing what our people do so well – protecting and reconnecting Tasmanians without power.

"We fully respect our people's right to take lawful industrial action, and I didn't declare this event lightly. I'm convinced that most striking workers want to pressure TasNetworks to the utmost lawful extent. And they'll be free to resume that once this weather event's passed and resulting outages have been resolved.

"But I'm equally convinced that most of our people want to serve and support Tasmanians in times of need, and feel a great sense of pride and duty in doing so," he said.

Dr Mc Goldrick has committed to terminate the event declaration once all repair and reconnection work relating to imminent storms has been completed – allowing lawful industrial action to resume,

if necessary. It's too early to estimate how long that will take, depending on the severity and spread of storm damage.

At 5pm on Monday 26 August, there are about 750 customers without power across almost 20 different outages.

To prioritise unplanned outages and help minimise the impact of union-led industrial action, TasNetworks has already suspended all planned work from at least Tuesday 20 August to Sunday 1 September. Planned work will remain suspended in response to any upcoming storm damage.

TasNetworks continues to meet with union representatives and individual bargaining representatives, with the next meeting scheduled for tomorrow (Tuesday 27 August). Dr Mc Goldrick said TasNetworks intends to table a revised EA offer at that meeting, for consideration.

The current average base salary of TasNetworks employees covered by its Enterprise Agreement is over \$100,000. The business's standing offer would increase wages by seven percent in Year One of the three-year agreement (not including overtime or allowances).

"Adding a full seven per cent for a workforce already averaging more than \$100,000 a year is a very good deal that supports and rewards our people better than ever before," Dr Mc Goldrick said.

"Our average salaries already compare very well to other Tasmanian wages. We're 'middle of the pack' on interstate pay parity, and offering another seven per cent.

"We must keep Tasmanians' power prices under control – which is why the union's extreme wage demands of up to 35 per cent are unacceptable and out of the question. We hope to reach an agreement soon," he said.

TasNetworks has thanked Tasmanians for their ongoing patience and support as the business stands its ground in protection of power prices.

TasNetworks' current Enterprise Agreement offer (to be revised tomorrow) includes:

- A Year 1 wage increase of seven per cent, plus a one-off payment of \$2,000;
- Year 2 and 3 increases linked to CPI or 2.25% (whichever's higher), with no capped maximum (keeping pace with inflation);
- Paid parental leave of 15 weeks for both parents;
- Days off (no longer charged as annual leave) during Christmas to New Years Day shutdown;
- Many other improved provisions.

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