

Industrial Update

Negotiation crucial factor

Pay rises of an initial 3 per cent are beginning to flow through to ALIA members. A crucial factor in obtaining a rise is, of course, the willingness of the employer to negotiate.

Industrial action

The Federal Government, as an employer, has been in less than a hurry to agree to an initial pay rise. Industrial action is being considered as this issue of *InCite* is in production.

It is worthwhile to examine a reasonable timetable for an award-restructuring review. The Industrial Relations Commission will grant the rise in cases where the employer and unions have signed an agreement to review the award. More of the 'nuts and bolts' details of the review will need to be agreed on within the next 6 months leading up to the second 3 per cent pay rise on offer from the Commission.

The result of the review may be an agreement to phase in changes over a longer period — say of up to 3 years. It may be agreed that the changes are overseen by an outside body, such as a Workplace Resource Centre (see *InCite* 10(17) of 30 October). Such timetables for change will vary considerably, depending on the progress of previous negotiations and the goodwill existing between the parties.

Clawbacks

Some employers have been making discussions on the pay rise conditional on negotiations on specific award conditions and work practices. This approach is not consistent with the National Wage Case Decision. The Industrial Relations Commission assured the ACTU that this decision was not designed to be a re-run of the two-tier system. Clawbacks of award conditions, trade-offs and specific productivity offsets are not required for the first 3 per cent pay rise to be granted. The Decision says that the new wage-fixing principles must not be used in a 'negative cost-cutting' manner.

Training medicine

In *Incite* of 30 October, I discussed the importance the Federal Government is placing on increased training and skills acquisition. I argued that ALIA should be involved in identifying and accrediting the vertically and horizontally segmented skills possessed by the Association's members. At present, accreditation is given for entry-level skills, through course recognition.

The issue of recognising additional qualifications and skills acquired has not yet been addressed by ALIA, even though it was raised by Eric Wainwright in 1987.

The Federal Government has moved to bring in procedures to accredit post-

entry training. As an example of this philosophy, we should consider the new General Practitioner Fee Scheme. Even the medical profession is not immune! Increased fees and Medicare rebates are available from 1 December to general practitioners who join a vocational register and undertake in-service training. Doctors on the register would receive a 3.9 per cent increase due to the restructuring of benefit items. The new Medicare items are based on the complexity of consultations and the skill they demand, rather than the time they take.

Any analogy with the library profession is limited in respect to occupation and funding arrangements. However, this is an example of how training and skills formation can be rewarded financially.

Contributions welcome

Industrial news contributions are welcome. The deadline for contributions to be included in the final *InCite* of the year (*InCite* 10(20), 11 December) is Friday 10 November 1989. Even brief notes stating how pay claims are progressing would be useful in compiling a national picture; and classification structures are of use to others who are looking for guidelines for change.

Watch this column and *InCite's* Events pages for news of seminars, meetings or workshops.

Tom McKeon

Industrial Information Officer

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