



APS948/2465
26th September, 2014

DECA NEGOTIATIONS ENTERED

Negotiations to replace the current Defence Enterprise Collective Agreement (DECA) commenced in Canberra yesterday, as foreshadowed in the last of these [bulletins](#).

On this occasion, the parties met for one day only. Future sessions will be held over two days, which is the more usual practice in Defence.

PARTIES

Defence was represented yesterday by five negotiators, four of whom had not participated in the 2011/12 negotiations.

Each of our two unions was represented, together with the CPSU and two individual bargaining representatives.

PURPOSES

The purposes of the meeting might best be encapsulated in the following points:

- Introduction
- Scene-setting
- Making a start to the negotiations

On the second of these points, Defence made presentations on its budgetary position and its First Principles Review. Defence also elaborated on what it meant by “streamlining”.

DANCE OF THE SEVEN VEILS

Defence intends to reveal its bargaining agenda progressively. It will table at each meeting its proposed reworking of the different Parts of the current DECA (with the changes tracked). Its position will, therefore, not be fully revealed for a number of meetings. Yesterday dealt with Part A - The Defence Environment only.

The next meeting will be held in Canberra on 15th and 16th October. At it, Defence will table its proposals for:

- Part E - Training, Education and Career Development
- Part I - Operation of the Agreement
- Annex H - Work Health and Safety Agreement

This program means that items of particular interest to the unions and their members, like remediating Defence physical science and engineering, leave provisions (including the DECA day) and wage increases, will not be introduced to the negotiations until - at the earliest - the third meeting, which is due to be held on 30th and 31st October.

It is not yet possible to sensibly speculate about whether or not agreement can be reached between the parties.

It can be said that yesterday's meeting was generally held in good spirit, although the discussion was occasionally feisty.

Defence stated that it is seeking a three year agreement, with those three years to commence from the time of approval of the new agreement (rather than from the nominal expiry date of the current DECA).

Our two unions are likely to convene a national telephone hook-up of their delegates after the next meeting.

You are encouraged to remain in close contact with your local delegate / representative.

