

Question: 3
Topic: Updated timeframes for enterprise agreement process
Asked: 8 February 2016

Senator WONG: Rather than going through it now, you gave an answer to a question on notice, I think No. 5.

Dr Laing: Yes.

Senator WONG: Would it be useful to update that?

Dr Laing: We can do that. There is one minor change I need to make to that, I think. We had a period of time nominated towards the end for lodging the enterprise agreement with the Fair Work Commission, which I think because of a typographical error said 16 days. It should be 14 days. I will update that now and then we will have a look at what we provided last time—

Senator WONG: Yes, just the time frames are different, obviously. That is fine.

Dr Laing: and see if there is anything new to add.

Answer:

The department commenced negotiating with employees, and the Community and Public Sector Union, on 12 June 2015 for a new enterprise agreement to replace the Department of the Senate Enterprise Agreement 2012-2015 which had a nominal expiry date of 30 June 2015.

Since then, the department and bargaining representatives have met three times (i.e. 14 July 2015, 27 August 2015, and 28 October 2015). Logs of claims have been received and are currently being considered by the department. The department has also requested advice in relation to the current enterprise agreement's terms and conditions from the Australian Public Service Commission.

The following summarises the next steps in the bargaining process and takes into consideration the Government's new bargaining policy, which was issued in 2015. Approvals will be sought as appropriate.

Step	Activity
1	Finalise the review of the logs of claims including costing all proposals.
2	Determine affordability and seek approval in relation to any proposed increases to remuneration and enhancements other conditions (if applicable).
3	Finalise the drafting of a proposed new enterprise agreement and its associated policies.
4	Meet with bargaining representatives and discuss the department's assessment of proposals and bargaining position in relation to remuneration and other conditions.
5	Negotiate and finalise the proposed enterprise agreement.
6	Consideration period (minimum of 7 days).

7	Ballot period.
8	Lodge the enterprise agreement with the Fair Work Commission within 14 days of the enterprise agreement being made if it is supported by the majority of eligible employees who vote. The replacement enterprise agreement commences seven days after approval. If proposed enterprise agreement is not supported, recommencement of bargaining (return to step 5).
9	Implement the new enterprise agreement.

The timeframe for the negotiation process is determined by a number of factors including administrative actions which need to be completed. Further information about the bargaining process will be released to staff as soon as practicable. Further meetings with bargaining representatives will then be scheduled.