

DECISION

Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009 s.158(1) RO Act - Application for alteration of eligibility rules

Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union (D2013/128)

VICE PRESIDENT HATCHER

SYDNEY, 16 JUNE 2014

Application for alteration of eligibility rules.

Introduction

- [1] On 1 October 2013 the Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union (ASU) filed an application for consent, under s.158 of the *Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009* (RO Act), to proposed alterations to its eligibility rule.
- [2] Rule 5 of the ASU's Rules is divided into two parts, (a) Description of Industry and (b) Eligibility for Membership. The ASU seeks to make two changes to part (b) Eligibility for Membership. The first is to amend Part XIV and Part XV of rule 5(b), and the second is to insert a new Part XXIII.
- [3] Part XIV and Part XV of rule 5(b) currently provide as follows:

"PART XIV

The Union shall consist of an unlimited number of employees (as defined in this Part) employed by the SECWA, the Gas Corporation or the Electricity Corporation.

For the purposes of this rule:

"SECWA" means the State Energy Commission of Western Australia.

"Electricity Corporation" means the body established as one of the successor organisations to State Energy Commission of Western Australia on 1 January 1995 pursuant to the Electricity Corporation Act (WA) 1994 and any successor, assignee or transmittee to the business or part of the business of the Electricity Corporation.

"Gas Corporation" means the body established as one of the successor organisations to State Energy Commission of Western Australia on 1 January 1995 pursuant to the Gas Corporation Act (WA) and any successor, assignee or transmittee to the business or part of the business of the Gas Corporation.

"Employees" means all persons engaged:

- (1) as salaried officers
- (2) in administrative, clerical, technical, engineering, scientific, professional, supervisory, managerial and operational classes of work
- (3) in occupational health nursing
- (4) in journalism or public relations.

PART XV

The Union shall consist of an unlimited number of employees employed by Edison Mission Operation and Maintenance Kwinana Pty Ltd. at the Kwinana Co-generation Plant, Kwinana, Western Australia (Edison Mission), or any successor, assignee or transmittee to or of the business or part of the business of Edison Mission."

[4] The proposed alteration to Parts XIV and XV in the ASU's application were as follows (with the changes in mark-up):

"PART XIV

The Union shall consist of an unlimited number of employees (as defined in this Part) employed by the SECWA, the Gas Corporation, or the Electricity Corporation, or a Utilities Corporation.

For the purposes of this rule:

"SECWA" means the State Energy Commission of Western Australia.

"Electricity Corporation" means the body established as one of the successor organisations to State Energy Commission of Western Australia on 1 January 1995 pursuant to the Electricity Corporation Act (WA) 1994 and any successor, assignee or transmittee to the business or part of the business of the Electricity Corporation.

"Gas Corporation" means the body established as one of the successor organisations to State Energy Commission of Western Australia on 1 January 1995 pursuant to the Gas Corporation Act (WA) and any successor, assignee or transmittee to the business or part of the business of the Gas Corporation.

"Utilities Corporation" includes any of Electricity Generation Corporation (T/A Verve Energy), Electricity Networks Corporation (T/A Western Power), Electricity Retail Corporation (T/A Synergy), Regional Power Corporation (T/A Horizon Power), AlintaGas Ltd, Alinta Limited, ATCO Gas Australia Limited, Monadelphous Energy Services Pty Ltd or any successor, assignee or transmittee whether immediate or not to or of the business or part of the business of any of those entities.

"Employees" means all persons engaged:

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(4) in journalism or public relations.

PART XV

The Union shall consist of an unlimited number of employees employed by Edison Mission IPM Operation & Maintenance Kwinana Pty Ltd at the Kwinana Coegeneration Plant, Kwinana, Western Australia (Edison Mission), ("IMP") or any successor, assignee, or transmittee, whether immediate or not to or of the business or part of the business of Edison Mission IPM."

[5] The proposed new Part XXIII was as follows:

"PART XXIII

Employees within the State of Western Australia engaged in:

- (a) the generation, transmission, distribution, and/or retailing of electricity; or
- (b) the transmission, distribution and/or retailing of gas; as salaried officers; in administrative, clerical, technical, engineering, scientific professional, supervisory, managerial and operational classes of work; in occupational health nursing; in journalism; or in public relations, shall be eligible to be members of the Union."
- [6] Notice of the ASU's application was published in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette Notices on 16 December 2013. Separate notices of objections were received from the Communications, Electrical, Electronic, Energy, Information, Postal, Plumbing and Allied Services Union of Australia (CEPU), the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF).
- [7] The grounds of the CEPU's objection, lodged on 19 December 2013, were as follows:
 - (1) that prescribed conditions for the application seeking the consent of the Fair Work Commission have not been complied with;
 - (2) that the alterations, the subject of the application, have not been made in accordance with the Rules of the applicant;
 - (3) the objector is an organisation to which persons could more conveniently belong for the purposes of s.158(4)(a) of the RO Act;
 - (4) the objector is an organisation that would more effectively represent persons who would be eligible for membership because of the alteration for the purposes of s.158(4)(b) of the RO Act;
 - (5) no undertaking is appropriate to avoid demarcation disputes that might arise from consent to the application being granted;
 - (6) the application is contrary to the objects of the RO Act; and
 - (7) such further or other grounds as the Fair Work Commission may deem fit.
- [8] The grounds of the CFMEU's objection, lodged on 6 January 2014, were:
 - (1) employees who fall within the eligibility rule proposed by the applicant could more conveniently be members of the objector; and

- (2) the objector is an organisation that would more effectively represent the employees who fall within the applicant's proposed eligibility rule.
- [9] The grounds of the ANMF's objection, lodged on 20 January 2014, were:
 - (1) in relation to persons who would be eligible for the membership of the ASU because of the proposed alteration, there is another organisation, namely the ANMF, to which some of the persons sought to be covered could more conveniently belong;
 - (2) in relation to persons who would be eligible for membership of the ASU because of the proposed alterations, there is another organisation, namely the ANMF, that could more effectively represent those members; and
 - (3) such further or other grounds as the Tribunal may deem fit.

Settlement of the objections

[10] After discussions between the ASU and the three objector unions, the objections were settled between the parties. The ASU agreed to amend its proposed alterations to rule 5(b). It filed an amended application on 3 June 2014 containing the amended alterations to rule 5(b) as follows (with the amendments to the original alterations marked up):

"PART XIV

The Union shall consist of an unlimited number of employees (as defined in this Part) employed by the SECWA, the Gas Corporation, the Electricity Corporation, or a Utilities Corporation.

For the purposes of this rule:

"SECWA" means the State Energy Commission of Western Australia.

"Electricity Corporation" means the body established as one of the successor organisations to State Energy Commission of Western Australia on 1 January 1995 pursuant to the Electricity Corporation Act (WA) 1994 and any successor, assignee or transmittee to the business or part of the business of the Electricity Corporation.

"Gas Corporation" means the body established as one of the successor organisations to State Energy Commission of Western Australia on 1 January 1995 pursuant to the Gas Corporation Act (WA) and any successor, assignee or transmittee to the business or part of the business of the Gas Corporation.

"Utilities Corporation" means any of Electricity Generation Corporation (T/A Verve Energy), Electricity Networks Corporation (T/A Western Power), Electricity Retail Corporation (T/A Synergy), Regional Power Corporation (T/A Horizon Power), AlintaGas Ltd, Alinta Limited, ATCO Gas Australia Limited, Monadelphous Energy Services Pty Ltd or any successor, assignee or transmittee to or of the business or part of the business of any of those entities.

"Employees" means all persons engaged:

- (1) as salaried officers;
- (2) in administrative, clerical, technical, engineering, scientific, professional, supervisory, managerial and operational classes of work;
- (3) in occupational health nursing;
- (4) in journalism or public relations.

PART XV

The Union shall consist of an unlimited number of employees employed by IPM Operation & Maintenance Kwinana Pty Ltd at the Kwinana Co-generation Plant, Kwinana, Western Australia, ("IPM") or any successor, assignee, or transmittee, whether immediate or not to or of the business or part of the business of IPM.

PART XXIII

Employees within the State of Western Australia engaged in:

- (1) The generation, transmission, distribution and/or retailing of electricity: as salaried officers; in administrative, clerical, technical, engineering, scientific, professional, supervisory, managerial and operational classes of work; in occupational health nursing; in journalism; or in public relations, shall be eligible to be members of the Union provided that:
- (a) employees eligible to be members of the Communications, Electrical, Electronic, Energy, Information, Postal, Plumbing and Allied Services Union of Australia (CEPU) requiring electrical, instrumentation, mechanical and fabrication skills as a requirement for their work, and who perform: linesperson work, electrical trades work, electrical instrumentation work, electrical fitting work, electrical mechanical work, electric cable jointing work, electrical meter repair work, incidental switching work as it applies to the work above, mechanical work, fabrication work and trades assistants/general assistants work (inclusive of crane driving, forklift driving, truck driving, where applicable) and co-ordination of a work team (for example team leader, crew leader, leading hand or team coordinator) as an incidental function to any of the above primary work, shall not be eligible for membership under paragraph (1) of this Part;
- (b) employees eligible for membership of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union:
 - (i) employed in power generation stations whose principal function is to undertake work variously known as power station controllers, power station operators, operator/maintainers, production officers, and plant operators who exercise direct control over the electricity generation process and employees engaged in substantially similar classifications and work;
 - (ii) employed by Transfield Worley Power Service Pty Ltd whose principal function is to exercise direct control over the electricity generation process or in maintenance activities at the Collie Power Station or in

- such employment by any successor, assignee or transmittee of that business or part of that business; or
- employed in power generation stations whose principal function is to exercise direct control over the electricity generation process or in maintenance work where the generation of power is ancillary to the employer's activities in another industry (notwithstanding that excess power may be sold into the grid e.g.Alcoa);

shall not be eligible for membership under paragraph (1) of this Part.

- (2) The transmission, distribution and/or retailing of gas; as salaried officers; in administrative, clerical, technical, engineering, scientific, professional, supervisory, managerial and operational classes of work; in occupational health nursing; in journalism; or in public relations, shall be eligible to be members of the Union."
- [11] The CEPU withdrew its objection on 5 June 2014 on the basis of the above agreed amendments to the proposed eligibility rule alterations and a confidential deed of settlement between it and the ASU. The ANMF withdrew its objection on 4 June 2014 on the basis of the above amendments and a signed undertaking entered into between it and the ASU. The undertaking between the ASU and the ANMF is that "[t]he ASU undertakes to the ANMF that in respect of the alteration to the ASU's rules provided for in the abovementioned application that it will not by the application disturb the status quo as to membership, awards, agreements and industrial coverage as between the two organisations.". The CFMEU withdrew its application on 5 June 2014 on the basis of the amendments only.
- [12] At the hearing of the ASU's application on 6 June 2014, the ASU sought that consent be granted to the amended alterations to rule 5(b) contained in its amended application lodged on 3 June 2014.

Consideration

- [13] Section 158 of the RO Act specifies a number of statutory requirements in respect of the grant of consent to changes or alterations to the eligibility rules of an organisation. I will deal with each of these in turn.
- [14] Section 158(2) provides as follows:
 - (2) The FWC may consent to a change or alteration in whole or part, but must not consent unless the FWC is satisfied that the change or alteration has been made under the rules of the organisation.
- [15] I am satisfied, on the basis of a declaration made by Mr David Smith, the National Secretary of the ASU, on 20 September 2013, that the alterations to rule 5(b) as contained in the ASU's original application filed on 1 October 2013 were made under the Rules of the ASU. However, the amended version of the alterations were not the subject of any further approval process by the ASU under its Rules. The question then arises whether it is permissible under s.158(2) to grant consent to the amended rules alterations.

[16] Section 158(2) provides that the Commission "may consent to a change or alteration in whole or part". In National Tertiary Education Industry Union v Community and Public Sector Union¹ the Australian Industrial Relations Commission (Williams SDP) adopted the view taken by the Full Bench of the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission in Re Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union of Australia² that the power to consent to alterations in part "is not limited to the 'blue pencil' rule, ie the physical deletion or striking out of parts of the proposed alteration" and that consent to textual amendments "which, as a matter of construction, exclude persons who would otherwise have been eligible under the rules as proposed" is permissible.³ It was further held in NTEU v CPSU and Re Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association⁴ that where partial consent is given to the alteration of eligibility rules, it is not necessary for the organisation applying for consent to have the amended rules submitted for approval again in accordance with the rules of the organisation.

[17] The ASU submitted that the amended proposed alterations to rule 5(b) represented a narrowing of the expansion to its eligibility rules compared to the original proposed alterations, and thus was capable of being consented to under s.158(2) in accordance with the principles stated above. I accept this submission. Consent to the amended proposed alterations would constitute partial consent to the proposed alterations in their original form, which as I have earlier found, were made under the ASU's Rules.

[18] Under s.158(4) the Commission is required not to consent to an alteration of the eligibility rules of an organisation if, in relation to persons who would be eligible for membership because of the alteration, there is, in the opinion of the Commission, another organisation to which these persons could more conveniently belong and that would more effectively represent those members. There was no material before me which would permit me to form the opinion that there was any organisation other than the ASU to which persons who would be eligible for membership of the ASU because of the alterations could more conveniently belong and which would more effectively represent those members.

[19] Section 158(5) provides that s.158(4) does not apply if the Commission accepts an undertaking from the organisation seeking the alteration that the Commission considers appropriate to avoid demarcation disputes that might otherwise arise from an overlap between the eligibility rules of that organisation and those of the other organisation. Since I have not formed the opinion referred to in s.158(4), s.158(5) is not relevant to my consideration of the ASU's application.

[20] Section 158(6) gives the Commission the discretion to refuse consent if it is satisfied that the alteration to the eligibility rules contravenes an agreement or understanding concerning representational rights to which the organisation is a party. There is no basis for me to conclude that any agreement or understanding relevant to the ASU's rules alteration exists.

[21] Section 158(7) also gives the Commission the discretion to refuse consent if it is satisfied that the alteration to the eligibility rules would change the effect of a demarcation

¹(1999) 93 IR 365 at [169]

² (1974) 157 CAR 623

³ Ibid at 627-628

⁴ Print H6763

order made under s.133 in a way which would give rise to a serious risk of a detrimental demarcation dispute. There is no basis for me to conclude that any demarcation order relevant to the rules alteration here exists. Nor, for the purposes of s.158(8), can I identify any other discretionary basis upon which consent to the proposed rules alteration should be refused.

[22] I therefore consent in part to the alteration of the ASU's Rules as proposed in the ASU's amended application and as set out in paragraph [10] of this decision. The alteration will take effect from 23 June 2014.



VICE PRESIDENT

Appearances:

M. Rizzo for the Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union
A. Thomas for the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union
M. Wright for the Communications, Electrical, Electronic, Energy, Information, Postal, Plumbing and Allied Services Union of Australia

Hearing details:

2014.

Sydney:

6 June.

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Tuesday 1st October 2013

General Manager Fair Work Commission Level 4, 11 Exhibition Street **MELBOURNE VIC 3000**

By E-mail: melbourne@fwc.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Application by the ASU, Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union for an Alteration to Eligibility Rules

Please find attached an Application by the Australian Services Union for consent to an alteration to its Eligibility Rules.

The Application is by way of the attached Form F68 signed by the authorised National Officer, and the attached declaration that the alteration was made in accordance with the Rules stating the actions taken under the Rules and verifying the facts stated in the application.

Please contact John Nucifora on 03 9342 1477 or Michael Rizzo on 03 9342 1440 if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully

David Smith

NATIONAL SECRETARY

and hit Mobile: 0419 644 238

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National Secretary David Smith

Assistant National Secretaries Greg McLean Linda White

Form F68 Application for Consent to the Alteration of Eligibility Rules of an Organisation

IN FAIR WORK AUSTRALIA

FWA use only	
FWA Matter No.:	

APPLICATION FOR CONSENT TO THE ALTERATION OF ELIGIBILITY RULES OF AN ORGANISATION

Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009
Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Regulations 2009—paragraph 121(1)(b)

Applicant Organisation

Name: Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union

ABN: 28 519 971 998

Address: Ground Floor, 116-124 Queensberry Street.

Suburb: Carlton South State: VIC Postcode: 3053

Contact person: David Smith, National Secretary

Title [if applicable] Mr [x] Mrs [] Ms [] Other [] specify:

Telephone: 03 9342 1400 **Mobile:**

Fax: 03 9342 1499 Email: <u>info@asu.asn.au</u>

A. The Alteration

The alteration of the eligibility rules of the organisation for which consent is sought is that rule 5 INDUSTRY AND ELIGIBILITY be altered by amending PART XIV and PART XV and by adding a new PART XXIII of sub rule 5 b as follows:

PART XIV

The Union shall consist of an unlimited number of employees (as defined in this Part) employed by the SECWA, the Gas Corporation, or the Electricity Corporation, or a Utilities Corporation.

For the purposes of this rule:

"SECWA" means the State Energy Commission of Western Australia.

"Electricity Corporation" means the body established as one of the successor organisations to State Energy Commission of Western Australia on 1 January 1995 pursuant to the Electricity Corporation Act (WA) 1994 and any successor, assignee or transmittee to the business or part of the business of the Electricity Corporation.

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of the Gas Corporation.

"Utilities Corporation" includes any of Electricity Generation Corporation (T/A Verve Energy), Electricity Networks Corporation (T/A Western Power), Electricity Retail Corporation (T/A Synergy), Regional Power Corporation (T/A Horizon Power), AlintaGas Ltd, Alinta Limited, ATCO Gas Australia Limited, Monadelphous Energy Services Pty Ltd or any successor, assignee or transmittee whether immediate or not to or of the business or part of the business of any of those entities.

"Employees" means all persons engaged:

- (1) as salaried officers;
- (2) in administrative, clerical, technical, engineering, scientific, professional, supervisory, managerial and operational classes of work;
- (3) in occupational health nursing;
- (4) in journalism or public relations.

PART XV

The Union shall consist of an unlimited number of employees employed by Edison Mission IPM Operation & Maintenance Kwinana Pty Ltd at the Kwinana Co - generation Plant, Kwinana, Western Australia (Edison Mission), ("IMP") or any successor, assignee, or transmittee, whether immediate or not to or of the business or part of the business of Edison Mission IPM.

PART XXIII

Employees within the State of Western Australia engaged in:

- (a) the generation, transmission, distribution and/or retailing of electricity; or
- (b) the transmission, distribution and/or retailing of gas; as salaried officers; in administrative, clerical, technical, engineering, scientific professional, supervisory, managerial and operational classes of work; in occupational health nursing; in journalism; or in public relations, shall be eligible to be members of the Union.

B. Reason for the proposed alteration

PART XIV and PART XV is to name the successors to former employers currently named in PART XIV and PART XV.

PART XXIII is to provide for the continued existing coverage of defined classes of employees in the Western Australian energy industry but without the requirement of naming each employer in the industry in the rule and to prevent a further necessity of ASU introducing new rules to name successor business each time a company changes hands or a new company enters the industry.

C. Effect of the proposed alteration

PART XIV and PART XV will clarify the names of the current successors to employers named in PART XIV and PART XV of rule 5b and will define the ASU's current coverage in the Western Australia energy industry.

PART XXIII This variation will within the current scope of the ASU Western Australian energy industry coverage (of defined classes of employees) continue to provide existing coverage of the employees in the industry but without the inclusion of the name of each business in the rule and regardless of whether employment is in the public or private sector.

The defined classes are: employees as salaried officers; in administrative, clerical, technical, engineering, scientific, professional, supervisory, managerial and operational classes of work; in occupational health nursing; in journalism; or in public relations.

Date: 20/9/13

Signature or Common Seal:

IN FAIR WORK AUSTRALIA

FWA use only

FWA Matter No.:

APPLICATION FOR CONSENT TO THE ALTERATION OF ELIGIBILITY RULES OF AN ORGANISATION

Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009
Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Regulations 2009—paragraph 121(1)(b)

DECLARATION

I, David Smith, of 116-124 Queensberry Street, Carlton South in the State of Victoria declare as follows:

- 1. The Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union ("ASU") is an organisation registered under the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009.
- 2. I am the National Secretary of the ASU and am authorised to make this Declaration.
- 3. The National Executive of the ASU has resolved to amend PART XIV and PART XV and to add a new PART XXIII to sub rule 5 b Eligibility for Membership as follows:

PART XIV

The Union shall consist of an unlimited number of employees (as defined in this Part) employed by the SECWA, the Gas Corporation, or a Utilities Corporation.

For the purposes of this rule:

"SECWA" means the State Energy Commission of Western Australia.

"Electricity Corporation" means the body established as one of the successor organisations to State Energy Commission of Western Australia on 1 January 1995 pursuant to the Electricity Corporation Act (WA) 1994 and any successor, assignee or transmittee to the business or part of the business of the Electricity Corporation.

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- (3) in occupational health nursing;
- (4) in journalism or public relations.

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PART XXIII

Employees within the State of Western Australia engaged in:

- (a) the generation, transmission, distribution and/or retailing of electricity; or
- (b) the transmission, distribution and/or retailing of gas; as salaried officers; in administrative, clerical, technical, engineering, scientific professional, supervisory, managerial and operational classes of work; in occupational health nursing; in journalism; or in public relations, shall be eligible to be members of the Union.

The action taken pursuant to the ASU rules was as follows:

1. On the 10 September 2013, the Branch Secretary of the Western Australian ASU Branch sent me a letter which stated as follows:

"10 September 2013

Mr David Smith National Secretary 116-124 Queensberry Street CARLTON SOUTH VIC 3053

Dear David,

RE: PROPOSED AMENDMENTS/ADDITION TO ASU NATIONAL RULES

As a member of the ASU National Executive, I am writing to you in accordance with Rule 49 "RULE ALTERATIONS" to include proposed amendments and a proposed addition to Rule 5b "ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP" to be submitted to the ASU National Executive for approval.

Please find enclosed proposed amendments to PART XIV and PART XV and a new PART XXIII.

Rule 49 requires that you receive proposed rule amendments/addition a least 21 days before the ASU National Executive at which the proposed rule change is to be voted upon. As these proposals will be mailed to you in the month of September 2013, there will be more than the required 21 days before the next National Executive scheduled for Tuesday, 19 November 2013 in Melbourne.

Yours sincerely,

Wayne Wood Branch Secretary"

- 2. I can confirm that on the 13th September 2013, a postal/fax/email ballot was submitted to all National Executive members via email and that members were provided with a copy of the letter from the Western Australian ASU Branch Secretary together with the proposed rule changes to PART XIV and PART XV and a new PART XXIII under Rule 5b of the ASU rules.
- 3. On the 20th September 2013, the result of the postal/fax/email ballot submitted to members of the National Executive via email was declared carried.
- 4. The alteration to the rules was made in accordance with the rules of the organisation.
- 5. The facts stated in the application for consent to the alteration are true and correct.

AND I MAKE this declaration conscientiously believing that to the best of my knowledge the statements contained in this declaration are true and correct.

DATED: 20/9/13

David Smith

National Secretary

Australian Municipal, Administrative, Clerical and Services Union