

## Report on meeting of National Councillors - 20 May 2020

The NTEU National Executive stated this afternoon that they will no longer be starting their ballot on the National Framework on May 25. They also stated – for the very first time – that members would be able to look at the actual, detailed, enterprise agreement clauses that will profoundly change our working conditions before this ballot.

We'll claim that as a win – it is incredible that we've had to push for this basic democratic right to be assured to members.

We also want to know – how long will we have to study these clauses before the national ballot? We rightly criticise management for giving only 24 hours notice of the wording of a variation – how long is the NE giving members to study and debate these clauses before a ballot to gauge members' attitudes?

Other than the assurance about seeing the clauses, it was all bad news – for democracy, for our union, and for our conditions – from this afternoon's meeting of National Councillors.

Unions have always changed from the bottom up, not from the top down. So although it's shocking, it's no huge surprise that despite the ferment of discussion and debate spreading across the country, the union's top leadership voted against basic democratic measures that would facilitate debate on the biggest decision our union has made in decades.

National Councillors voted 84 to 24 against hosting a public debate involving equal time for both sides; 80 to 18 against circulating material from both sides; 84 to 19 against immediately releasing all agreed EA clauses (and the parameters of debate on outstanding clauses); and 83 to 20 against releasing paid organisers from a duty to national office to actively promote the Framework regardless of the position of their branch.

So the top leadership of the union is persisting in shutting down the space for democratic debate, and trying to sell a Framework that can cut \$375 per fortnight out of the wages of an admin worker on \$65,000pa.

As active unionists, we will persist.

Union democracy is not "the national leadership decides and we all fall into line". Union democracy is small numbers, then hundreds, and ultimately thousands of members engaging with the union for the first time, getting across the issues and getting active on matters of vital importance.

Real union democracy starts, not in the upper reaches of power, but in the workplace. And that is where you will find us, every hour of the day: going through the Framework clause by clause, cutting through the spin, convincing our workmates that it is not a done deal – and that turning things around starts with Voting NO.