

FAIRFAX UPDATE

REDUNDANCY PROCESS

At a productive meeting yesterday afternoon with Alliance officials and delegates from Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra, the company outlined its proposed process on redundancy.

A voluntary round will commence in mid-July and remain open for up to four weeks. Applicants will be assessed according to a definition of "suitability" the company says it is currently developing. They have undertaken to provide that definition to the Alliance for discussion before the redundancy round commencing.

The Alliance requested the pay office provide payment estimates to all editorial staff who request them before the opening of the round, and that accommodation be provided on-site for MediaSuper financial advisors so that members have easy and practical access to free financial advice.

We again raised the difficulty presented to members in attempting to decide whether or not to volunteer for redundancy in the absence of detailed information on the shape of newsrooms and rosters in the future.

The idea of a staggered redundancy process was raised, effectively allowing people to volunteer at later stages as the editorial review is progressively implemented. The company agreed to take the idea away for consideration.

A number of other issues were raised, including –

- The inclusion of casual service for the calculation of redundancy entitlements,
- The flexibility for staff to accept re-deployment on a trial basis and still access redundancy if it doesn't work out,
- The need for senior roles to be spread proportionally across the group and not just in one city,
- Is there a review of the number of foreign bureaux and what is the timeframe for decisions,
- That the Canberra Times will have a presence in the Canberra Gallery,
- In the event redundancies occur amongst library or editorial assistant staff they should receive payments according to the editorial EBA.

These and other issues will be the subject of formal correspondence and ongoing negotiation in the coming days.

EDITORIAL REVIEW

As previously agreed, the company provided us with a confidential briefing on the outcome of the editorial review process. They advised a full briefing would be presented to staff this Wednesday.

The Alliance emphasised the need for more detailed information more quickly given the impending redundancy round.

It is intended to hold national stopwork meetings this Thursday after everyone has had the opportunity to receive a report on the review and digest its findings.