

NWC: Focus On Productivity Growth In Tight Labour Market



Members of the 2014/2015 National Wages Council

The National Wages Council (NWC) guidelines for 2014/2015 released on 30 May 2014 focused on productivity growth in a tight labour market. NWC Chairman Professor Lim Pin explained that the NWC felt it was important “to recognise that the labour market will remain tight in 2014, and expected to tighten further”.

This tightness would place upward pressure on wages, and therefore it was important to have productivity improvements

in order for wage growth to be sustainable and not erode Singapore’s economic competitiveness.

The NWC also focused on the vulnerable group of low-wage workers, whose income growth had lagged the rest of the workforce. To build on the momentum generated by the last two years’ recommendations of built-in wage increases for low-wage workers earning a basic monthly salary of up to \$1,000, the NWC recommended this year that companies

employing this group of workers grant them a built-in wage increase of at least \$60.

There was also recognition that the group of low-wage workers earning above \$1,000 should be granted an equitable and reasonable wage increase and/or a one-off lump sum, based on their skills and productivity.

As many low-wage workers work in industries where outsourcing practices are widespread, the NWC further called on the employers and service buyers in these industries to make a special effort to uplift the pay of the low-wage workers and incorporate NWC wage recommendations into outsourced service contracts.

For companies that may find it challenging to meet the recommendations, particularly the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the NWC recommended that they earnestly consider how to tap on the Government assistance schemes such as the Quality Growth Programme to improve their productivity and bottom-lines so that their employees could also benefit from sustainable wage increases.

Creating Better Workplaces

Employers can look forward to new enhancements to WorkPro from July to implement quality health programmes for their mature workers and flexible work arrangements (FWAs). Senior Minister of State for Health and Manpower Dr Amy Khor announced these new enhancements at an

Age Management Seminar organised by NTUC and various tripartite partners on 18 June 2014.

Launched in April 2013, WorkPro aims to augment local manpower, foster progressive workplaces and strengthen the Singaporean core in the workforce. Enhancements have

been made to the Work-Life Grant and Age Management Grant which come under WorkPro.

For more information on WorkPro, visit: www.wda.gov.sg/workpro. Companies can also approach NTUC for consultancy services and advice to apply for WorkPro at 6213 8383 or email: workpro@ntuc.org.sg

Key Enhancements To WorkPro Effective 1 July 2014

	CURRENT	ENHANCEMENTS
WORK-LIFE GRANT	(A) Up to \$40,000 funding after implementing FWAs. (B) Up to \$40,000 per year if 30% of workers utilise FWAs.	Up to \$40,000 funding, including \$10,000 to pilot FWAs and \$10,000 to fully implement them. Up to \$25,000 per year if 20% of workers utilise FWAs.
AGE MANAGEMENT GRANT	A re-employment policy in place and at least two types of age-management practices to tap on the grant.	A Workplace Health Promotion (WHP) Facilitator’s Course and implementing a standardised Health and Wellness Programme for mature workers.

Transforming Our Workforce And Creating Opportunities For A Better Future



From left: Singapore National Employers Federation President Stephen Lee, Manpower Minister Tan Chuan-Jin, NTUC President Diana Chia and NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say.

Held on 21 April 2014, the annual Singapore Tripartism Forum saw over 500 unionists, management partners and Government representatives engaging in a lively dialogue with panellists Manpower Minister Tan Chuan-Jin, Singapore National Employers Federation President Stephen Lee, NTUC Secretary-General Lim Swee Say and NTUC President Diana Chia.

With stagnating productivity growth, the tripartite leaders urged management representatives to transform the workforce to be more productive. Also discussed was the importance of career pathways, Continuing Education and Training and an inclusive tripartism that embraces foreign manpower, all levels of workers and those in management levels.

Strengthening Tripartite Ties



The fourth run of the Tripartite Leadership Programme (TLP) took place from 2 to 3 April 2014 at Orchid Country Club. The programme, jointly developed by the Ministry of Manpower, NTUC and Singapore National Employers Federation, aims to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of the work of tripartite partners as well as improve the bonds among future leaders.

The programme also builds capacity in the areas of leadership and industrial relations among the partners. This year's run saw some 18 participants from the tripartite partners joining the programme. Topics included building strong labour-management relations and the challenges facing tripartism and its impact on the economy. Participants also benefitted from the sharing of veteran tripartite leaders.

The programme included an overseas module where participants went to Hong Kong from 7 to 10 April 2014 to learn how the country deals with union and local labour issues and its approach towards tripartism.

The local module saw Guest-of-Honour Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Manpower and Education Hawazi Daipi stressing the importance of sustaining efforts in safeguarding Singapore's strong foundation of tripartite partnership and industrial harmony.



Manpower Minister Tan Chuan-Jin (middle) with award recipients

TAFEP Exemplary Employer Award 2014

Eight organisations were awarded the TAFEP Exemplary Employer Award in 2014, recording the most number of winners for the Award since its launch in 2010. The accomplishment of the winners underscores effective adoption of fair and inclusive employment practices in Singapore.

As more employers place stronger emphasis on ensuring diversity and inclusiveness across the board, some pay significant attention to specific areas of employment such as age and gender management.

In addition, seven Special Mention Award titles were also given to distinguish employers who have achieved significant milestones in targeted areas in their journey towards fair and inclusive workplaces.

Exemplary employers know one of the key formulae of success is to place emphasis on the correlation of staying competitive and sustainable while practising diversity and inclusiveness at the workplace. These employers are role models for fellow organisations to learn and discover the business benefits of adopting these practices.

For more information on the list of TAFEP Exemplary Employer Award Winners, please visit on the link below.
<http://www.tafep.sg/assets/files/Publications/TAFEP%20Award%20Booklet%202014.pdf>