

Wage Offer Explained (continued)

The Government says its current offer is for an annual 2.5% wage increase through the EB, but that isn't how it would actually work. Because the Award has overtaken the agreement, the effect of signing on to the Government's offer would be a 0% pay rise for most members, up to 1.3% for AO8.4, applied from 1 February 2019.

EB Offer Increase in 2019 (offer to apply from 1 February)

AO2.8	0.0%
AO3.4	0.0%
AO4.4	0.1%
AO5.4	0.5%
AO6.4	0.8%
AO7.4	1.1%
AO8.4	1.3%

Some members would then receive EB increases on 1 February 2020 and 2021, but these would be discounted by increases won in the State Wage Case. If the State Wage Case provides a 2.5% increase, most public servants would remain on the Award. If the State Wage Case is higher, more and more public servants will be affected.

If the Award doesn't move in 2019 and 2020 the offer includes at most a 6.3% cumulative wage increase over the life of the agreement and as little as 3.8%, not the 7.5% it looks like the government is offering over three years.

	2020	2021	Cumulative (over 3 years)
AO2.8	1.3%	2.5%	3.8%
AO3.4	2.1%	2.5%	4.6%
AO4.4	2.5%	2.5%	5.1%
AO5.4	2.5%	2.5%	5.5%
AO6.4	2.5%	2.5%	5.8%
AO7.4	2.5%	2.5%	6.1%
AO8.4	2.5%	2.5%	6.3%

This is different to the offer, and real outcome, that other public servants are receiving. Doctors, nurses and other public servants are actually receiving 2.5% a year.

This is deeply unfair when your wage rates are already behind Queensland Health and Transport and Main Roads. Now the government offer would make this gap worse when in fact they should be seeking to apply an equal pay rate.

Why has the Award overtaken the agreement?

The Award has steadily gained ground on the rates in your collective agreement over the last decade. This is a result of successful union arguments in the State Wage Case and National Wage Adjustment over many years.

The strength of the Award system in Queensland is also due to the decision of the Bligh government, since reintroduced by the Palaszczuk government, to enact legislation which allows the QIRC to 'roll up' wage rates in expired collective agreements into the Awards. This last occurred for Together members in the Core in 2011, when the rates from the expired 2008 collective agreement were 'rolled up' into the Award.

This has meant the Award system in the Queensland public service has remained stronger than the Award system in the private sector and the Fair Work jurisdiction.

In 2012 the Newman government's wage freeze meant that members in the Core missed out on a wage increase for eighteen months. Since 2012, the State Wages Policy has been consistently below the average increase applied to the Award. The pay rises in your agreement have failed to keep pace with rises in the Award. This is how the Award has gradually caught and overtaken the rates in your collective agreement.

