

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

CORE

www.together.org.au/bargaining

Core 2018-19 campaign

2018 was a big year for union members in the Queensland public service. As negotiations continue on your new collective agreement, we wanted to give you an update on what's happened and where we are now. Throughout the year you took part in some big industrial actions, including work bans, stoppages and major public rallies. The actions you took forced the Government to pay attention to issues affecting the whole public service.

Every three years public sector union members bargain with their employer, to seek wages and conditions that are better than the Award. Since your previous agreement was due to expire on 31 August, bargaining was scheduled to start in June.

Before bargaining began, members and delegates across Queensland were already talking about how to improve our Queensland public service workplaces.

This included holding workplace meetings and taking part in surveys. Many members said that they were frustrated by situations where managers abuse systems and processes in a way that makes it harder for people to get their jobs done. This affects careers, job satisfaction, and service delivery. Members want the Government to take concrete steps towards improving conditions in the public service.

The best way to achieve this is through the bargaining process.

In March, delegates met at Branch Conference to start formulating a log of claims for bargaining.



They endorsed a wage claim of \$50-a-week or 3.5%, whichever is greater, in line with the ACTU's national wage campaign. Members campaigned for a change in the Government's Wages Policy from the current maximum increase of 2.5% to \$50-a-week or 3.5%.

Delegates also elected a steering committee to guide the campaign and attend negotiations.

During April and May delegates had conversations and meetings at work about how to improve your workplaces. There was strong interest and engagement from members on issues around recruitment and selection, employment security and wages.

Delegates used these conversations to work on the log of claims and to strengthen delegate and activist networks ahead of the bargaining campaign.

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OFFERS BY AGENCY



Authorised Alex Scott Together Branch Secretary

Delegates on the steering committee started meeting in April and held preliminary discussions with the Office of Industrial Relations on behalf of the Government. Because the Government had not yet provided instructions to departments or OIR, they could not provide a 'yes' or 'no' to any of our claims with costs attached.

Negotiations formally commenced in June, with your delegates Shanti Thompson (Department of Environment and Science) and Rachel Barley (Department of Natural Resources, Mines & Energy) attending negotiations alongside union staff.

They continued to put the case about why we need to change the rules in the public service to restore merit and ensure fair treatment to public servants.

Agency-based negotiations began in July. Delegates continued to hold workplace meetings and finalised a central log of claims at the Branch Conference on 30 July.

As Together members you have the right to participate in protected industrial action. Protected industrial action is action, like a work ban or stoppage (also known as a strike), you can take during bargaining that is protected by law.

It needs to be authorised by a vote of members called a Protected Action Ballot.

In August and September members passed a range of Protected Action Ballots across all 'core' departments and agencies, authorising administrative work bans, work stoppages up to an hour and workplace- and community-based protests to commence once your old agreement had expired.

State Wage Case

Every year, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission decides the State Wage Case. This sets the rates for all state awards, including the award covering Queensland public servants. The effect of the Commission's decision on 29 August was to increase all awards by 3.5%.

Members saw the effect of this rise in their pay checks from 10 October (backdated to 1 September) because this increase had pushed the rates in the award higher than the rates in their collective agreement.

Not everyone got the same increase, because the Award overtook the agreement by different amounts. (See table 1 and table 2 at right).

The government's wage offer was for AO2, AO3 and most AO4s to get no increase above the award.

Say no to 0%!

The first major cross-department action began with 'Say no to 0%!' rallies in the Brisbane CBD and regional centres in September. Members from across the public service held stop work rallies outside 1 William Street and at Emma Miller Place following rallies in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Maryborough, Toowoomba and the Coasts.

Members and delegates met in their workplaces to discuss further action if the Government would not come to the table.

The Government made a formal offer on Monday 24 September 2018 on non-wage matters.

The next day the steering committee agreed to consider the offer and consult with members before reconvening at the end of the week.

Members and delegates decided that the offer failed to provide any real improvements on the key issues of wages, employment security and temporary employment and so agreed to reject it and push for a better deal in conciliation.

The Government was notified of this decision on 28 September and delegates applied for conciliation with the QIRC on 3 October.

Throughout October members across the state stepped up their campaign with a series of regional rallies and events culminating in Brisbane on October 30.

2019 began with a series of conciliation meetings in January and February. In conciliation, your Union and the employer continue negotiations with the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission acting as an "independent umpire".

We wanted the QIRC's help to get the Government to address the issues that members have raised concerning wages, recruitment and job security.

Discussions with agencies have continued outside the conciliation process, with the Government offering some movement, but many issues remain outstanding. Members in these agencies have continued to push for a better deal.



What are Protected Action Ballots or PABs?

PABs are a ballot of members in a particular workplace that allows members to take protected industrial action.

PABs were held in DNRME, DPWH, DES (August 24), DATSIP & QBFP (September 7), QCAA & Queensland Treasury (September 12), RTA & DESBT (September 13), the general Core (September 23) and a second PAB in QBFP (October 26).

**TABLE 1
WAGE INCREASE FROM
STATE WAGE CASE**

Top pay point	State wage increase
AO2.8	3.5%
AO3.4	2.9%
AO4.4	2.39%
AO5.4	1.96%
AO6.4	1.67%
AO7.4	1.4%
AO8.4	1.22%

**TABLE 2
NATIONAL WAGE AWARD
INCREASE VS STATE
WAGE INCREASE**

	National wage increase	QLD wage increase
2011	3.40%	3.40%
2012	2.90%	2.90%
2013	2.60%	2.60%
2014	3%	3%
2015	2.50%	2.50%
2016	2.40%	2.40%
2017	3.30%	3.30%
2018	3.50%	3.50%

THE CAMPAIGN SO FAR..

2018

Members endorse wages claim



Delegate meetings were held regularly throughout the campaign. The first meeting of our Core EB steering committee occurred on July 9.

"Wages Matter" campaign activities

WAGES matter!

Members endorse EB claim



Protected action ballots: work bans commence

PABs in TOTAL: 24

See left for PAB explainer.

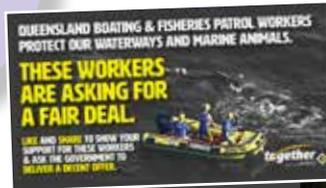
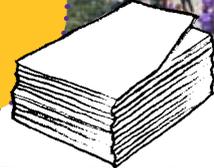
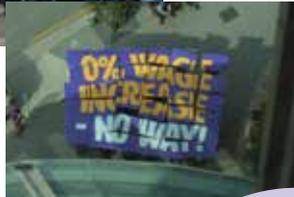
Unions win 3.5% increase to Awards

1 William Street Rally

Regional rallies

Emma Miller Place Rally

Rallies were held in Brisbane at 1 William Street on September 17 and on September 27 at Emma Miller place. Rallies were also held in various regional locations from Cairns to the Gold Coast.



Queensland Boating & Fisheries Patrol take industrial action





On October 30 a rally was held at Parliament House in Brisbane. Buses ferried workers from all over South-East Queensland.

Parliament House Rally

Conciliation begins



Conciliation meetings began on October 31. The November 7 meeting centred on temporary and casual conversion to permanent & accredited training. On November 14 the meeting focussed on recruitment processes (including temporary/permanent issues), as well as labour hire. November 21 – Pay equity, flexible work practices, PSC related policies. November 28 – discussion of agency issues. The December 5 meeting discussed employment security and the impact of new technology. The December 12 meeting was a review of outstanding issues.



Application for conciliation

On September 28 the delegate steering committee decided to formally reject the government's offer. On October 3 delegates applied for conciliation. On November 7 delegates decided to escalate industrial action. On December 14 delegates endorsed a Delegate Conference in March 2019.

Delegates reject offer

NO DEAL!



Full offer on non-wage issues



Offers by Agency 2018/19

DATSIP

The Department stated its commitment to improving the cultural capability of all staff, and that it was reviewing the take-up of cultural training. They stated an intent to only use labour hire when there is an urgent need for a specific skill set that can't be met within the agency, however did not agree to any new or improved clauses in the agreement.

DAF

The Department agreed to create an aggregated shift allowance of 9.7% for QBFP officers, but did not agree for this to attract additional superannuation. Penalty rates in the Award would apply for penalty hours over 192 per year. They agreed to remove the requirement that the first four Sundays worked by officers in a year be compensated by TOIL.

The Department additionally offered to pay officers with a Coxswain certificate a first aid allowance and committed to working with the union to standardise commencement pay levels. They did not commit to additional roles or a reclassification of officers roles.

Members rejected this offer and negotiations continue.

DCDSS

The Department made a commitment that, if there were any impacts on the employment security of AS&RS staff as a result of the NDIS (which they insist there will not be), these staff would have access to the same support that Disability Services staff have. They agreed to consult over any decision that significantly affect employees but would not make a specific commitment relating to the Deloitte review into AS&RS.

DES

The Department agreed to appoint new Environmental Officers and Senior Environmental Officers to the PO stream. They made a commitment to minimise the use of labour-hire and casual employment.

DHPW

The Department did not agree to translate therapists into a Health Practitioner stream. The Department has announced the conversion of sixty-one of the temporary positions formerly funded under National Partnership on Remote Housing (NPRH) into permanent positions.

DNRME

The Department rejected claims for allowances covering Valuers' registration, Mental Health First Aiders and Wellness Ambassadors. They referred other claims to central core negotiations.

Office of the Governor

The Office did not agree to allow for staff to request an audit of their penalty hours to ensure they were paid for any in excess of the annual block shift allowance.

They did not commit to more secure employment for security officers on short term contracts.

OLGR

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General are seeking to remove the conditions of employment set out in a Determination of the Industrial Relations Commission relating to Casino Inspectors performing shift work and are seeking for Casino Inspectors and Liquor Licensing officers to undertake more integrated duties across both areas.

The offer that has been made is to provide transitional arrangements for workers employed under the expired Determination. They have proposed the preservation of existing block pay percentage payments for the life of the agreement and 12 hour shift arrangements for two years.

They have further proposed limitations on the scope of duties to be performed across functions and the circumstances where liquor work is to be performed by casino inspectors.

QBCC

QBCC provided an in principle commitment to developing Organisational Change Guidelines with the Union and to consult over the potential adoption of new technology. They agreed to update its Discipline Policy and to review Plumbing Inspectors' roles for possible reclassification to the TO stream.

QCS

In discussions QCS agreed that the use of labour hire is undesirable but did not make a commitment to address this at the agency level. They referred labour hire and other issues to central core negotiations.

The Service acknowledged that it's not fair to have two different pay structures amongst Surveillance Officers and agreed that no staff should be disadvantaged by a review. However, they did not commit to transitioning all staff to the AO4 stream and classification.

They indicated a desire to maintain the professional requirements for probation and parole officers.

QFES

QFES referred several claims on to the Command and Control Review and offered to continue discussions outside of enterprise bargaining.

RTA

The RTA and delegates reached in principle agreement on Organisational Change Guidelines. They did not commit to a timeline for the backfilling of vacancies or a guarantee that no employee will be required to work standard hours.

Central offer 2019

The government provided a revised offer to members on Wednesday 13 February. This offer was an improvement on the September offer but did not change the wages offer other than to move the back pay date to 1 February 2019. The Government has made a commitment that there will be no diminution of existing conditions.

The current Government's Employment Security and Contracting-out of Services policies will be retained as an appendix to the agreement.

The criteria for considering conversion of temporary to permanent status in the current Public Service Commission directive will be included in the certified agreement.

Clauses will be developed in consultation with the Union acknowledging:

- the Government's existing commitment to support pay equity;
- the Government's existing commitment to support workplace flexibility;
- the Government's existing commitment to employee's mental health;
- the importance of work-life balance measures and of assisting employees to balance work and family;
- the importance of the role of fire wardens and workplace health and safety officers;
- the ability of agencies to agree to hours of work arrangements in accordance with the Award;

- the role of professional development and training; and
- that labour-hire should only be used where permanent employment is not viable or appropriate.

Agencies will be required to develop local consultative arrangements and appropriate travel policies for regional, rural and remote employees.

Agencies would be required to create equal employment opportunities committees to report on issues relating to gender equity.

Agencies would be required to consult about proposed technological change or advancements which may affect or impact on employee's employment.

The Government has provided in-principle agreement that the Public Service Commission will continue to work with the union to improve performance management. The Public Service Commission will also promote a range of existing programmes relating to work-life balance and recruitment and selection, including Expressions of Interest to promote internal transfers between regional locations.



Where are we now?

Your delegate Steering Committee met 7 February and agreed to ballot members on the Government's revised offer. The Government finally agreed to provide an updated offer 13 February. You can see the details of this revised offer above. We will inform you on the ballot results as soon as we can.

Once the ballot results are known, the Steering Committee and other delegates will to discuss the ballot and other member feedback and make decisions about how to proceed on this basis.

If the Government progress during conciliation has not been enough for members, the agreement could be referred to arbitration. Arbitration can be a lengthy process, more like a trial than a negotiation.

In arbitration, Together would be making the strongest case for fair wage increases above the award and improvements to conditions, but the final decision rests with the QIRC.

The steering committee has recommended that members not accept the offer currently on the table.

Overall the Government is simply offering more of the same and as Union members you know that more of the same isn't good enough.

Your voice is important. This is your agreement, and it will govern your wages and conditions for the next three years. It's crucial that all members have their say in their EB and stay strong, united and active.

VOTE IN THE BALLOT TODAY!

