

Child Safety, Youth & Women and Youth Justice – what are we seeking through arbitration?

We are currently in arbitration for the Child Safety, Youth & Women (including Youth Justice) collective agreement. Right now we are writing a full agreement as we would want it to come out from the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC).

This is a key document for the QIRC to consider. It is our aim for the end of the process. It is our pitch to the independent umpire that if union members got to draft the agreement on our own it would say this. Your Steering Committee delegates and union office staff will be making the strongest and most comprehensive arguments then to support the changes we are seeking.

Read through to find out how you can help make our case as strong as possible!

Here are the highlights of our position:

Wages – a 3.5% increase in the first year and, over the life of this determination, bringing CSYW & YJ workers to pay parity with their colleagues in Queensland Health.

Classifications – attraction and retention is a significant issue for CSYW & YJ. There are a range of positions that we are seeking to be reclassified at higher levels, including Child Safety Officers, Youth Workers and AO2 administration officers, to ensure that you are recognised for the work that you do.

More Stringent Guidelines for Temporary Conversions – despite significant improvements to temporary conversions achieved by your union more recently, we are still seeing employers try to use any opportunity to not make long-term temporary workers permanent. Our claim is for more direct guidelines around conversion, to eliminate these possibilities.

Hours of Work – our claim is to allow workers to convert any hours accrued above the carry-over limit to Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) or to be paid out. You shouldn't have to 'donate' hours to the Department because of workload issues – you should be remunerated for the hours that you work.

Workloads & Caseloads – every worker deserves to have the ability to escalate their workload concerns when there is an issue. Our proposal ensures that these mechanisms are available and encouraged. For Child Safety Officers, we are seeking a caseload cap and escalation process.

Long-Term Higher Duties – we are seeking to introduce a process whereby staff who have been performing higher duties for a long period are able to be directly appointed to that role when it becomes vacant.

Training & Development – it's important that, as workers, you have the opportunity to access professional development and training. Our claim is for an allowance per worker to ensure that you have equitable access to training and development that is right for you.

Backfill, Relief Pools & Vacancy Replacement – workloads in CSYW & YJ are high enough as is without having to pick up work when vacancies aren't filled in a timely manner. It's also important for workers to take their leave. These claims propose timeframes around ensuring vacancies are filled, as well as the creation of effective relief pools.

This is not a comprehensive list of our claims, and, of course, we are seeking to ensure that your existing entitlements are preserved – such as consultation, union delegate rights, dispute settlement and other matters.

Remember – only union members get to have a say, and only union members influence the outcome of this process. If you're not yet a member, speak to your local delegate or join online at www.together.org.au/join

For the most up-to-date information, make sure you go to www.together.org.au/csyw to stay informed. We will also need evidence and witness statements from members about what is really happening in Child Safety, Youth & Women and Youth Justice, and how our proposals will make life better for you, your co-workers and the families you work with.