

Wages and your EB

What is happening with my wages?

Union members are the people who make the difference on wages.

It has been union members who have stood up for fair wages and seeking equal pay across the government. Fair pay and making sure that your wages keep up with increases in costs are essential.

Recently, Together members across the public service voted to accept offers from the government to settle a number of agreements, including the Core, Department of Education, Child Safety Youth & Women and Youth Justice, and Youth Detention Centres. These offers addressed a large number of outstanding claims in bargaining for these new agreements. This was a great win and an important intervention from the Premier to get to this point.

The government has accepted many of your key claims and agreed to pay the \$1250 – however union members will still be prosecuting your case for a payrise and equal pay in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission in 2020.

Thanks to the hard work and persistence of union members the government made much improved offers with better conditions. This ensures all public servants covered by the above mentioned agreements will be paid the \$1250 'one off' payment while we will continue to prosecute the case for higher wages before the independent umpire.

When will I see my \$1250 payment?

Your \$1250 one-off payment (pro rata for part-time and casual staff) will be paid:

Department of Education (excluding OIR): 26th February, 2020.

Core (excluding QFES), Child Safety Youth & Women and Youth Justice, Youth Detention Centres: 25th March, 2020.

QFES: 11th March, 2020.

What's this about 2.5% in the government offer?

Unfortunately, some of the government messages about the new agreement and wages are confusing.

In 2019 union members won a 3% increase to pay through the State Wage Case. This meant everyone's pay went up by 3% in 2019 from 1 September 2019.

The government's official position is a 2.5% increase – on EB rates that are expired. Nobody is being paid these rates right now. Everyone is currently on the Award rate of pay, that is higher. That's why it's important that if union members want to see a pay increase in 2020 that we run this in the arbitration this year.

The government will continue to argue in the Commission on the basis of their current wages policy. But the Commission has already awarded the 3% wage increase via the state wage case (which cannot be taken away).

We believe there are strong arguments for a real wage increase through this arbitration process. Backpay to the expiry of the previous Agreement is also part of our claim for arbitration.

When will the agreement take effect?

While union members have already voted on the offer there will also need to be an all-staff ballot on the agreement before it can be 'certified' by the Industrial Relations Commission. As a union member, you will get a vote in this ballot and you should vote!

The new entitlements and new wages arbitration process will not commence until the agreement is certified.

You should remind your colleagues, who may not be union members, that none of these improvements, the one-off payment and opportunity for higher pay would have happened without union members like you and they should join you to make sure they are up to date and part of these exciting changes.

What about if I am on leave?

We understand that if you are on leave (even unpaid leave) – you will be paid the one-off payment.

Will the one-off payment be taxed?

The one-off payment counts as income and will be paid in one of your normal fortnightly pays. The payment is taxed; tax treatment will vary based on your income (if you have other salary sacrificing arrangements or a HECS/HELP debt for example). We did ask if the payment could be paid separate to a scheduled pay run but that is not possible.

What about the arbitration on wages?

We don't yet have dates for when the arbitration for wages will start after your agreement is certified. It will be in 2020 and will need to be decided before 1 September in order to meet the date of wage increase in the proposed agreement. As part of our claim for arbitration we will be arguing for back-pay to 2018.