

UFUQ Summary of Queensland's Industrial Relations System

Australia's industrial relations (IR) laws work through a dual state/federal system, with two different acts operating separately at each level. The state government has retained jurisdiction over the IR system for QLD public sector employees, including for employees of the fire service.

The state system is administered by the *Industrial Relations Act 2016* (the Act), and any disputes are referred to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission (QIRC). This means that the *Fair Work Act 2009* does not apply to employees of the fire service in Queensland.

The terms and conditions of your employment come from three types of industrial instrument, the Queensland Employment Standards (QES), which are prescribed in the Act, your Award, and your Certified Agreement.



Queensland Employment Standards (QES)

The minimum employment standards for all workers covered by the state system in Queensland are set out in Part 2 of the Act. They cover 9 basic rights relating to all paid employment, including, but not limited to, minimum wage, entitlement to paid and unpaid leave, public holiday provisions and jury service. All awards and certified agreements operate on top of this minimum framework.

Awards

Awards expand on the QES and provide a new minimum standard of employment conditions for employees in specific industries or occupations. Awards provide a much more comprehensive framework than the QES because they include employment arrangements and conditions specific to the industry.

Our awards contain higher minimum wage rates, as well as industry-specific provisions relating to hours of work, occupational safety, allowances, uniforms etc. The award also includes dispute resolution processes and rules for union involvement in the workplace.

Your award (the *Queensland Fire and Emergency Service Employees Award – State 2016*) can be found on the UFUQ website.

Certified Agreements

Employers and unions can negotiate for conditions above those provided in the award through the process of collective bargaining. Agreements commonly expire after 3 years, at which time the parties meet to negotiate the terms of the next agreement. Where the parties can come to a consensus, the draft will be voted on by all employees and sent to the QIRC for certification.

A certified agreement generally contains higher wage rates and better entitlements than provided for in the award. Your day-to-day work conditions and pay rates can be found in your current certified agreement (the *Queensland Fire and Emergency Service Certified Agreement 2016*) which can also be found on the UFUQ website.